

**A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS**

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I certify that this thesis was composed and completed by myself during the course of my own individual research.

Matthew T. Bliss, 1997.

Deo Primitiae

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certification	i
Dedication	ii
Table of Contents	iii-v
Abstract	vi-vii
Abbreviations	viii-xii
Preface	xiii
 INTRODUCTION	 1
I. Definition of Rhetorical Criticism	2
II. Its Origin and Development	5
A. From Earliest Times	5
B. The Modern Rediscovery of Rhetoric	10
III. Methodology	18
A. Classical Rhetorical Criticism	19
B. Modern Rhetorical Criticism	24
IV. The Origins and Sources of Classical Rhetoric	26
V. Epistolary Rhetoric	33
VI. Conclusion to the Introduction	38
A. Objectives	38
B. Outline of the Body of the Work	40
C. Summary	41
 CHAPTER ONE: THE RHETORICAL UNIT	 42
I.A. Colossians as a Rhetorical Unit	42
I.B. Concerning the Compositional Integrity of Colossians	43
I.C. The Contribution of Rhetorical Criticism in Determining the Literary Integrity and Authenticity of Texts	47
I.D. Arrangement (<i>Dispositio</i>)	53
I.D.1. The Classical Rhetorical Theory of Arrangement	53
I.D.2. The Rhetorical Arrangement of Colossians	63
I.D.2.a. Commentators' Non-Rhetorical Outlines of Colossians	64
I.D.2.b. Commentators' Rhetorical Outlines of Colossians	66
I.D.2.c. A New Rhetorical Outline of Colossians	72

CHAPTER TWO: THE RHETORICAL SITUATION	75
II.A. A Definition of Rhetorical Situation	75
II.B. Rhetorical Situation and Argumentation	78
II.C. Colossians' Rhetorical Situation in Rhetorical Commentators	79
II.D. The Situational Complex of Colossians	81
EXCURSUS: The Question of Authorship	81
I. Questions of Language	83
II. Questions of Theology	87
A. Christology	87
B. Ecclesiology	88
C. Eschatology	89
D. Appeal to Apostolic Authority	91
III. Questions concerning the Epistle's Relationship to Ephesians	92
IV. A Proposal for Pauline Authorship	93
II.D.1. The Speaker	99
II.D.2. The Audience	104
II.D.3. The Speech or Subject	107
II.E. The Exigence of Colossians	109
II.E.1. Proposing an Exigence	109
II.E.2. A Proposed Exigence	116
II.F. The Rhetorical Constraints	118
II.G. The Rhetorical Problems	121
 CHAPTER THREE: THE <i>STASIS</i> AND <i>GENUS</i> OF COLOSSIANS	 123
III.A. <i>Stasis</i> Theory	123
III.A.1. <i>Stasis</i> Defined	124
III.A.2. Types of <i>Stases</i>	127
III.A.3. The <i>Stasis</i> of Colossians	132
III.B. The Rhetorical <i>Genre</i>	139
III.B.1. Difficulties with Classical Categories	140
III.B.2. The Three Rhetorical <i>Genera</i>	142
III.B.3. The <i>Genus</i> of Colossians	154
 CHAPTER FOUR: THE RHETORICAL INVENTION, ARRANGEMENT, AND STYLE	 156
IV.A. The Προοίμιον	157
IV.A.1. The Epistolary Prescript (1:1-2)	158
IV.A.2. The <i>Exordium</i> Proper (1:3-9a)	177
IV.B. The Πρόθεσις (1:9b-12a)	210
IV.C. The Πίστις (1:12b-4:6)	228

IV.C.1. First Elaborated Argument (1:12b-22)	233
IV.C.2. Second Elaborated Argument (1:23-2:5)	269
IV.C.3. Third Elaborated Argument (2:6-4:6)	289
IV.C.3.a. Introduction	289
IV.C.3.b. The <i>Refutatio</i> (2:6-23)	295
IV.C.3.c. The <i>Confirmatio</i> (3:1-4:6)	315
IV.D. The 'Επίλογος (4:7-18)	334

CHAPTER FIVE: RHETORICAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS 342

V.A. Rhetorical Evaluation	342
V.B. Conclusions	350
Bibliography	358

ABSTRACT

The study begins with an introduction which defines rhetorical criticism, traces its development from the Church Fathers to the present, examines methodologies, and summarizes the major sources of classical theory and epistolary rhetoric. The classical methodology of Kennedy is chosen, and its five steps constitute the five chapters of the thesis. The objectives are to understand the intent of the author, the persuasive power of the text upon the original audience, and how the author has transmitted his intent through the text.

In Chapter one Colossians is established as a legitimate rhetorical unit with definable introduction, body, and conclusion. Theories regarding the integrity of the text and incorporation of traditional materials are examined. Classical theories of arrangement are discussed and commentators' outlines are examined. An Aristotelian outline is proposed.

Chapter two defines the rhetorical situation as a complex of persons, events, objects, relations, times, and places which interact to compel the production of discourse to alter an exigence. The relationship of rhetorical situation to argumentation is discussed and the situation proposed by commentators for Colossians is summarized before investigating the letter's rhetorical complex. The question of authorship is treated and Pauline authorship is proposed. Principal characters, recipients, place and date of writing, and general content are examined. The exigence is reconstructed, with emphasis placed not on "heresy" but on the opportunity presented by the return of Onesimus to his master to encourage and instruct the Colossians in mature knowledge and conduct. The rhetorical constraints used are identified, including Paul's personal *ethos*, tradition, and propriety. Finally, rhetorical problems facing Paul are noted: he did not personally know his audience, lacked first-hand information of the situation in Colossae, and was prevented by imprisonment from a personal visit.

Chapter three examines the letter's *stasis* and *genus*. Classical *stasis* theory is summarized and types of *stases* explained. The proposition of Colossians is examined to discover authorial intent. The *causa* is complex, consisting of two interrelated rational, definite questions, both exhibiting qualitative *stases*. Classical theories of *genera* are discussed and Aristotle's tripartite division is chosen as a model. Colossians' core goals of instruction and modification of behavior indicate a deliberative document which relies heavily upon epideictic.

Chapter four contains a detailed examination of the letter's parts, including the author's management of materials and use of style to accomplish his purpose through the argumentation. The prescript is included under the *exordium* for practical purposes. The *causa* is identified as honorable, and the *exordium* is shown to be a *principium* which acts as an introduction, and in Colossians also resembles a *narratio* by recounting events which have led up to the present situation. It employs epideictic in a series of *encomia* to gain the good-will and attention of the audience and further strengthens the *ethos* of the author. The Apostle declares what he wishes to accomplish in the *propositio*: that his audience have full knowledge of God's will in order to please the Lord in everything by bearing fruit and increasing

in knowledge, being strengthened to persevere, and giving thanks to the Father. The *argumentatio* treats these objectives in a series of elaborated arguments, first in the Christ hymn which instructs in fuller knowledge and is intended to lead the audience to thanksgiving by its elevated style and epideictic. This is followed by a charge to persevere, supported by the example of Paul's own joyful suffering. The argumentation flows into a warning against certain false teachings, then into a comparison of the old to the new as the author expounds upon proper Christian conduct. The epistle lacks a true *peroratio*, but the postscript serves as a closing.

Chapter five consists of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the epistle's rhetoric and a summary and general conclusion to the thesis. The letter's persuasive strength derives mainly from the *ethos* of the author, the gospel tradition, and the author's skillful use of epideictic and elaborated arguments. Its weaknesses include vague, verbose style and degeneration of the later argumentation into a series of brief, unconnected imperatives. The most striking result of the analysis is the shift of emphasis from the "heresy" and the Christ hymn to the letter's moral exhortations, which has broad implications for the interpretation of the letter's situation and the author's objectives.

ABBREVIATIONS

CLASSICAL AUTHORS:

Abbreviation:	Author:	Work:
<i>AdHer</i>	[Pseudo-Cicero]	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>
<i>ArRhet</i>	Aristotle	<i>The Art of Rhetoric</i>
<i>Brut</i>	Cicero	<i>Brutus</i>
<i>Categor</i>	Aristotle	<i>Categories</i>
<i>ConAp</i>	Josephus	<i>Contra Apion</i>
<i>Conf</i>	Augustine	<i>Confessions</i>
<i>DeInv</i>	Cicero	<i>De Inventione</i>
<i>Demon</i>	Isocrates	<i>To Demonicus</i>
<i>DeOr</i>	Cicero	<i>De Oratore</i>
<i>DeDocChr</i>	Augustine	<i>De Doctrina Christiana</i>
<i>Gorg</i>	Plato	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>InstOr</i>	Quintilian	<i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
<i>Laws</i>	Plato	<i>Laws</i>
<i>MenRhet</i>	Menander	<i>Menander Rhetor</i>
<i>OptGen</i>	Cicero	<i>De Optimo Genere Oratorum</i>
<i>Or</i>	Cicero	<i>Orator</i>
<i>Panegyrr</i>	Isocrates	<i>Panegyricus</i>
<i>PartOr</i>	Cicero	<i>De Partitione Oratoriae</i>
<i>Phdr</i>	Plato	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Phil</i>	Isocrates	<i>Philipus</i>
<i>Poet</i>	Aristotle	<i>The Poetics</i>
<i>RhetAlex</i>	[Pseudo-Aristotle]	<i>Rhetorica ad Alexandrum</i>
<i>Stasis</i>	Hermogenes	<i>On Stasis</i>
<i>Style</i>	Demetrius	<i>On Style</i>
<i>Subl</i>	Longinus	<i>On the Sublime</i>
<i>Top</i>	Aristotle	<i>Topica</i>
<i>Topica</i>	Cicero	<i>Topica</i>
<i>TypEp</i>	[Pseudo-Demetrius]	<i>Typoi Epistolikoi</i>
<i>Types</i>	Hermogenes	<i>On Types of Style</i>

PERIODICALS:

Abbreviation:	Full Title:
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AntAbend</i>	<i>Antike und Abendland</i>
<i>Arg</i>	<i>Argumentation</i>
<i>AsiaJTh</i>	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>AusBR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>Bijd</i>	<i>Bijdragen</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
<i>BS</i>	<i>Biblical Studies</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BulBR</i>	<i>Bulletin of Biblical Research</i>
<i>BulCProtE</i>	<i>Bulletin du Centre Protestant d'Études</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CalThJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>ComQ</i>	<i>Communication Quarterly</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>CRBS</i>	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
<i>CritInq</i>	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
<i>CSSJ</i>	<i>Central States Speech Journal</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>Dialog</i>	<i>Dialog</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>Flor</i>	<i>Florilegium</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>GrRom</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>GSpComJ</i>	<i>Georgia Speech Communication Journal</i>
<i>GTJ</i>	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HZ</i>	<i>Historische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IrBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>

<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JLT</i>	<i>Journal of Literature and Theology</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JThSoAfrica</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
<i>LB</i>	<i>Linguistica Biblica</i>
<i>LTP</i>	<i>Laval théologique et philosophique</i>
<i>MPhilol</i>	<i>Modern Philologist</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NotesTrans</i>	<i>Notes on Translation</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NRT</i>	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>PhilR</i>	<i>Philosophy and Rhetoric</i>
<i>Phron</i>	<i>Phronesis</i>
<i>Poet</i>	<i>Poétique</i>
<i>QJS</i>	<i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i>
<i>RefThR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>RevEx</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevSR</i>	<i>Revue de science religieuse</i>
<i>Rhet</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>
<i>RSQ</i>	<i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i>
<i>Scrip</i>	<i>Scriptura</i>
<i>StBibT</i>	<i>Studia Biblical et Theologica</i>
<i>StEv</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>StVladTQ</i>	<i>Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
<i>SpMono</i>	<i>Speech Monographs</i>
<i>SpT</i>	<i>Speech Teacher</i>
<i>TTK</i>	<i>Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke</i>
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
<i>ThBer</i>	<i>Theologische Berichte</i>
<i>TheolEduc</i>	<i>Theology and Education</i>
<i>Trad</i>	<i>Traditio</i>
<i>TSK</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WJSpCom</i>	<i>Western Journal of Speech Communication</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

FURTHER ABBREVIATIONS:

Abbreviation:	Full Title:
AAWG-PHK	Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
AE	Artemis Einführungen
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BFT	Biblical Foundations in Theology
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
CC	Corpus Christianorum
CHS	Center for Hermeneutical Studies
DisAbs	Dissertation Abstracts
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
FFNT	Foundations and Facets: New Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
GTA	Göttinger theologische Arbeiten
HAW	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
HTIBS	Historic Texts and Interpreters in Biblical Scholarship
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IB	Interpreter's Bible
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LBC	Layman's Bible Commentaries
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LLA	Library of the Liberal Arts
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTC	New Testament Commentary (Banner of Truth Trust)
PG	Patrologiae Graecae

PTMS	Pittsburg Theological Monograph Series
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBL SBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCP	Studies in Classical Philosophy
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions
SHVL	Skrifter Utgivna Av Kungl. Humanistika Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund
SKP	Studien zur klassischen Philologie
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TAPA	Transactions of the American Philological Association
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
ThHist	Théologie Historique
TK	Texte und Kommentare
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
TU	Text und Untersuchungen
TWAS	Twayne's World Author Series
UWSLL	University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WSPL	Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Literature
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

PREFACE

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Matthew Todd Bliss

INTRODUCTION

It may perhaps seem inept of me to relate Paul's prose to rhetorical conventions. But it is my opinion that the Pauline style of writing can be better understood if the *series* and *dispositio* of each section is taken into consideration. For the material itself shows that Paul did not write completely without any order or *ratio*. He has his *loci* in which he prepares the minds of his readers; he has his particular method of teaching and of explanation. Not to notice this in our exposition would be simply doing what the Greeks call jumping in the dark...¹

This study purports to be a rhetorical analysis of the epistle to the Colossians. But what exactly does that mean? What is rhetorical analysis? What type of rhetorical analysis is employed? Even a brief glance through a few of the many books and articles of recent years which make use of rhetoric suggests that there are as many types of rhetorical criticism as rhetorical critics. Is there a method to rhetorical criticism? And what theories or sources is it based upon? How does rhetorical criticism differ from other critical forms of biblical analysis? What is its origin and how has it developed? Is rhetorical analysis a legitimate and useful technique for interpreting the epistles of the New Testament, in particular Colossians? And perhaps most importantly, why rhetorical criticism? What benefits can such a study hope to offer?

These are not idle questions, nor are they questions only for those unfamiliar with interpretation via rhetoric; they are questions which every serious rhetorical critic should seek to answer. In the course of this introduction I will attempt to set

¹Melanchthon, P. *Paul's Letter to the Colossians*, trans. D.C. Parker (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1989), 32; subsequently Melanchthon, *Colossians*.

forth as briefly, clearly, and accurately as possible all relevant information, providing reasoned answers to these important questions in order to build a sturdy and reliable foundation for the analysis proper.

I. DEFINITION OF RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Let us first begin by answering the question, "What is rhetorical criticism?" In spite of the proliferation of "rhetorical critical" studies, few writers—even of treatises on the subject—actually bother to provide a precise definition of "rhetorical criticism". B.L. Mack in his *Rhetoric and the New Testament* suggests cryptically that rhetorical criticism consists in "an approach to texts with an eye to social histories".² G.A. Kennedy likewise fails to offer a definition in his *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, relying instead upon a description of the objectives he wishes to achieve through rhetorical criticism: "to look at passages of Scripture in the persuasive context in which we find them....reading the Bible as it would be read by an early Christian..."³ S.G. Hatfield gives the following definition for rhetorical criticism: "the analysis of the macrolevel patterns and various microlevel devices which compose a literary unit", which has as its goal "the understanding of how the macrolevel patterns and microlevel devices help to

²Mack, B.L. *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 17; subsequently Mack, *Rhetoric*.

³Kennedy, G.A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 4-5; subsequently Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*.

convey the meaning of the author and how they help to persuade the reader."⁴

For the purpose of this study I will define the rhetorical criticism of the New Testament as the art of examining the *structures* and *devices* (such as logical proofs, divisions, style, figures of speech) of a text in conjunction with its historical *situation* and *content*, particularly as all these factors function together to effect a *result* (either that intended by the author or one beyond him⁵).

Rhetorical criticism differs from form and redaction criticism in its attention to the individuality of a passage, its argumentation, style, and persuasive effect.⁶ Form criticism, like redaction criticism, presupposes fragmented texts pieced together by an editor; the focus is not upon the text as text but upon conjectured sources of the text. On the other hand, rhetorical criticism examines (or, can choose to examine) a document as a final whole, regardless of redactions; the intent of the text as text becomes supreme.⁷

Rhetorical criticism is sometimes seen as a specific form of literary criticism, in so far as both presume that the NT contains traits which allow it to be treated as literature. Literary criticism is interested in such matters as artistic principles of

⁴Hatfield, S.G. "The Rhetorical Function of Selected Vice/Virtue Lists in the Letters of Paul" (Ph.D. diss.: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987), 113; subsequently Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function". (NB: for Hatfield macrolevel = matters of arrangement; microlevel = of style, figures of speech.)

⁵The masculine pronoun is used here and throughout for simplicity and clarity except where the subject is known to be female. The masculine pronoun has been chosen for this purpose since most of the ancient writers treated in this study were men.

⁶See Muilenburg, J. "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969), 1-18; subsequently Muilenburg, "Form Criticism". See also Greenwood, D. "Rhetorical Criticism and Formgeschichte: Some Methodological Considerations," *JBL* 89 (1970), 418-426.

⁷See Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 4.

beauty and unity, literary genres, the use of figurative or rhetorical devices, the situation of a text in its literary context, and comparison of a text with archetypes and motifs recurrent in literature.⁸ Literary approaches such as Frye's, however, move away from the text in its historical context.⁹ Literary criticism, especially as manifested in stylistics, concentrates more on comparisons with literary 'norms' whereas rhetorical criticism focuses on an author's style to understand his intent and the text's impact.

Unlike structuralism which attempts to focus on the unconscious deep structures which compose a text, rhetorical criticism seeks to understand features visible in a text's surface structure (e.g. figures of speech, enthymemes, divisions).

Rhetorical analysis, although it may be carried out on letters, is distinct from epistolary analysis. The latter compares a text to the ancient epistolary theorists or draws parallels to extant letters from antiquity in the hope of gaining insight into the text's structure, genre, etc. Rhetorical analysis, on the other hand, examines the rhetoric of a text: the structure of its argumentation, its devices of style and their purpose, and the like. To accomplish this, the rhetorical critic may appeal to the ancient manuals of rhetoric or to modern rhetorical theorists, or he may set the text beside another to compare the rhetoric of each.

⁸See for example, Frye, N. *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981); Petersen, N.R. *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Ryken, L. *The New Testament in Literary Criticism* (New York: Fredrick Ungar Co., 1984).

⁹"...Frye's stance throughout is that of a twentieth-century literary critic. He views the Bible in terms of language and myth as understood in our times; he has less interest in the intent of the biblical writers, more interest in how the Bible was read by great literary geniuses of other times..." Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 5.

Rhetorical analysis should not be seen as a replacement for any of these hermeneutical methodologies, but rather as a supplement to them.

II. ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

"From the beginning it was taken for granted that the writings produced by early Christians were to be read as rhetorical compositions. Origen, for example, or Augustine, knew no other school for making sense of written compositions but the school of rhetoric."¹⁰

Chronological Overview

A. FROM EARLIEST TIMES

Although the contemporary revival in the rhetorical criticism of the New Testament began only about twenty-five years ago, its roots and lineage stretch back to the early centuries of the church.¹¹ Many of the Christian church's most renowned Fathers, such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Augustine of Hippo, were themselves trained in classical rhetoric and philosophy. In the fourth book of his *De Doctrina Christiana*, Saint Augustine expounds upon the rhetorical style of the

¹⁰Mack, *Rhetoric*, 10.

¹¹For more on the history of New Testament rhetorical criticism, see Mack, *Rhetoric*, 9-17; Meynet, R. "Histoire de 'l'analyse rhétorique' en exégèse biblique," *Rhet* 8 (1990), 291-312; Pogoloff, S.M. *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), chap. 1 (subsequently Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*); Watson, D.F. *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBLDS 104; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 1-8 (subsequently Watson, *Jude*); Watson, D.F. and Hauser, A.J. *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 101-125 (subsequently Watson and Hauser, *Comprehensive Bibliography*); Wuellner, W. "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11," in *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*, eds. P.J. Hartin and J.H. Petzer (NTTS 15; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 171-185 (subsequently Wuellner, "Narrative Rhetoric").

biblical authors with particular emphasis being given to the Apostle Paul.¹² The Apostle's style, he suggested, could be improved by "substituting certain words which have the same meaning or by changing the order of the words already there."¹³ John Chrysostom did not think Paul's literary art could equal that of classical standards;¹⁴ while Jerome considered Paul's "avoidance of rhetorical polish as the secret of his evangelistic success."¹⁵

Although the Fathers realized that Paul's writings did not meet up to the classical standards, nonetheless, they recognized rhetorical skill in his works: "Just as we do not say that the Apostle followed the precepts of eloquence, so also we do not deny that his wisdom was accompanied by eloquence."¹⁶

Among a long list of medieval writers on rhetoric, the Venerable Bede in England listed examples of figures and tropes in the Old and New Testaments in his *De Schematibus et tropis*.¹⁷ Later, Renaissance fascination with the classical world brought a renewed interest in rhetoric which continued into the Reformation, during

¹²On *Christian Doctrine*, trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr. (LLA; Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1958); subsequently Augustine, *DeDocChr*. See also Kennedy, G.A. *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 149-160; subsequently Kennedy, *Christian and Secular*.

¹³Augustine, *DeDocChr* 4,20,41.

¹⁴Chrysostom, J. *Sacerdot* 4,5; ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Petit-Montrouge, 1858).

¹⁵See Judge, E.A. "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice," *AusBR* 16 (1968), 42; subsequently Judge, "Paul's Boasting".

¹⁶Augustine, *DeDocChr* 4,7,11.

¹⁷"Bede's *De Schematibus et tropis* - A Translation," trans. G.H. Tannenhau, *QJS* 48 (1962), 237-53; repr. as "Concerning Figures and Tropes" in *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, eds. J.M. Miller, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 96-122.

which biblical scholars concentrated upon the rhetoric of Paul. Erasmus noted rhetorical points in his work on 1 and 2 Corinthians.¹⁸ The German reformer and scholar Philip Melanchthon wrote rhetorical commentaries on Romans and Galatians in which he employed both the classical theories of invention, arrangement, and style as well as contemporary rhetorical techniques.¹⁹ In 1527 he also published a rhetorical commentary on *Paul's Letter to the Colossians*,²⁰ of particular interest with regard to this study. John Calvin performed a rhetorical critique of Romans²¹ in addition to providing notes on rhetorical features throughout the New Testament in his other commentaries.

In the two centuries immediately following the Reformation, biblical exegetes did continue to apply rhetorical categories and theories to the New Testament texts, but to a far lesser degree. Of note from this time are J.A. Ernesti, whose profound knowledge of rhetoric²² influenced his approach to hermeneutics in his *Institutio interpretis Novi Testamenti*,²³ and K.L. Bauer, who produced a massive study on

¹⁸Erasmus, D. *Paraphrasis in duas epistolas Pauli ad Corinthios*, (Louanii: n.p., 1519).

¹⁹Melanchthon's importance is particularly emphasized by Classen, C.J. "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik," *ZNW* 82 (1991), 1-32. Cf. the somewhat reworked English edition, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," *Rhet* 10 (1992), 319-344.

²⁰See above, footnote 1.

²¹Calvin, J. *In omnes D. Pauli Novi Testamenti Epistolas, atque etia in Epistola ad Hebraeos commentaria luculentissima*, (Genevae: apud I. Gerardum, 1551); see also Girardin, B. *Rhétorique et théologie: Calvin, Le commentaire de l'Épître aux Romains* (ThHist 54; Paris: Beauchesne, 1979).

²²Another work of J.A. Ernesti's is his *Initia rhetorica* (Leipzig: Casper Fritsch, 1784); another Ernesti, J.C.G., also wrote several helpful works on rhetoric, including: *Lexicon technologiae Graecorum rhetoricae* (Leipzig: Casper Fritsch, 1795), and *Lexicon technologiae Latinorum rhetoricae* (Leipzig: Casper Fritsch, 1797).

²³Ernesti, J.A. *Institutio interpretis Novi Testamenti* (Leipzig: Weidmanni et Reichium, 1775).

Paul's use of classical rhetorical techniques.²⁴

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, most works touching upon the rhetoric of the New Testament came from Germany. In Britain, John Jebb wrote his *Sacred Literature*, which included analysis of the stylistic devices and structures of the New Testament.²⁵ In 1843, C.G. Wilke published his work on the style, structure, and argumentation of the New Testament, entitled *Die neutestamentliche Rhetorik: Ein Seitenstück zur Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms*.²⁶ C.F.G. Heinrici later employed a rhetorical approach in his commentary on 2 Corinthians.²⁷ In 1897, J. Weiss wrote "Beiträge zur Paulinischen Rhetorik".²⁸ The following year E. Norden's survey of ancient rhetorical prose (which also discusses the rhetoric of the New Testament), *Die antike Kunstprosa*, appeared.²⁹ Norden found Paul's argumentation strange, his style non-Greek, and his letters 'artless' in comparison to classical writers.³⁰ The same year in Britain E.W. Bullinger published his

²⁴Bauer, K.L. *Rhetoricae Paullinae, vel, Quid oratorium sit in oratione Paulli* (Halae: Impensis Orphanotrophi, 1782), 2 vols.; subsequently Bauer, *Rhetoricae Paullinae*.

²⁵Jebb, J. *Sacred Literature* (London: A. and R. Spottiswoode, 1820).

²⁶Wilke, C.G. *Die neutestamentliche Rhetorik: Ein Seitenstück zur Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (Dresden & Leipzig: Arnold, 1843).

²⁷Heinrici, C.F.G. *Das zweite Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus an die Korinther* (Berlin: Hertz, 1887).

²⁸Weiss, J. "Beiträge zur paulinischen Rhetorik," in *Theologische Studien. Herrn Wirk. Oberkonsistorialrath Professor D. Bernhard Weiss zu seinem 70. Geburtstage dargebracht*, eds. C.R. Gregory, et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), 165-247.

²⁹Norden, E. *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert vor Christus in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1898), 2 vols.; subsequently Norden, *Kunstprosa*.

³⁰Norden, *Kunstprosa*, vol.2, 493ff.

*Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*³¹—an immense listing of many of the figures which appear throughout the Scriptures. In 1900 E. König's *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur* was published.³² It provides an encyclopedic listing of linguistic and rhetorical devices found in the Bible. In 1908 J. Weiss wrote *Die Aufgaben der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft in dem Gegenwart*³³ in which he analyzed Paul's sentence structure, rhetorical style, and devices under the assumption that the epistles were written with the intent that they be read publicly and therefore that they contain rhetorical features. Also of importance is the doctoral dissertation of Weiss's student, Rudolf Bultmann: *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*.³⁴ This work was published in 1910 and attempted to prove Pauline reliance upon popular philosophy and the Cynic-Stoic diatribe form. Three years later, Eduard Norden produced another influential work, *Agnostos Theos*,³⁵ which deals with several particular rhetorical manifestations within the NT.

In general after the First World War interest and instruction in rhetoric declined, especially with the increase in interest in the History of Religions school.

³¹Bullinger, E.W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968); subsequently Bullinger, *Figures*.

³²König, E. *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur* (Leipzig: Theodor Weicher, 1900).

³³Weiss, J. *Die Aufgaben der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft in dem Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908).

³⁴Bultmann, R. *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (FRLANT 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).

³⁵Norden, E. *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1913).

Rhetoric had become more and more to be identified merely with stylistic ornamentation and the New Testament to be considered as outside the literary sphere of the Greco-Roman world.³⁶ A few works of importance on the rhetoric of the New Testament continued to be produced during this period however. Among them are Lund's *Chiasmus in the New Testament*,³⁷ Jennrich's "Classical Rhetoric in the New Testament,"³⁸ Jeremias's "Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen,"³⁹ and Schneider's *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*,⁴⁰ all of which focus predominantly on stylistic concerns.

B. THE MODERN REDISCOVERY OF RHETORIC

In the past 30 years a new interest in rhetoric and its hermeneutical potential has arisen.⁴¹ From within New Testament scholarship the limits of form and

³⁶See Betz, H.D. "The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology According to the Apostle Paul," in *L'apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère*, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University, 1986), 19-21; Mack, *Rhetoric*, 9-12; Pocoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 15-22; and Watson and Hauser, *Comprehensive Bibliography*, 105.

³⁷Lund, N. *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942); subsequently Lund, *Chiasmus*.

³⁸Jennrich, W. "Classical Rhetoric in the New Testament," *CJ* 44 (1948), 30-32.

³⁹Jeremias, J. "Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen," in *ZNW* 49 (1958), 145-156.

⁴⁰Schneider, N. *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese* (HUT 11; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1970).

⁴¹See further, Black, C.C., II. "Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," *ExpT* 100 (1989), 252-258; "Rhetorical Questions: The New Testament, Classical Rhetoric, and Current Interpretation," *Dialog* 29 (1990), 62-70; Botha, J. "On the 'Reinvention' of Rhetoric," *Scrip* 31 (1989), 14-31 (subsequently Botha, "Reinvention"); Lambrecht, J. "Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament," *Bij* 50 (1989), 239-253 (subsequently Lambrecht, "Rhetorical Criticism"); Robbins, V.K. and Patton, J.H. "Rhetoric and Biblical Criticism," *QJS* 66 (1980), 327-350; Wuellner, W. "Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?," *CBQ* 49 (1987), 448-463 (subsequently Wuellner, "Where?").

redaction criticism began to become apparent by the late 1960's, while in other areas of the humanities there simultaneously arose a new interest in other aspects of rhetoric beyond ornamentation. The most influential of these works has been Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *La Nouvelle Rhétorique: Traité l'argumentation*, which was a rediscovery both of the argumentative strategies and persuasive aspects of rhetoric as well as of the rhetorical nature of all linguistic communication (whether spoken or written).⁴² Their work takes rhetoric beyond style to the rules of persuasion held by a particular culture or society and emphasizes the impact of situation upon argumentation.⁴³

The NT scholar, Amos Wilder, in his *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel*⁴⁴ published in 1964, claimed that the early Christians produced new modes and genres of communication to proclaim their message and thus effected a revolution of sorts in language. The consciousness of the Gospel writers, their social and historical context, and their purpose for writing, according to Wilder, are ascertainable in the unique literature they created. Expanding upon Wilder's ideas, Robert Funk two years later published his *Language, Hermeneutic*,

⁴²Perelman, C. and Olbrechts-Tyteca, L. *La Nouvelle Rhétorique: Traité l'argumentation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958); English trans. J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969); subsequently Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*.

⁴³See Mack, *Rhetoric*, 13ff.

⁴⁴Wilder, A. *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) originally published under the title *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964); subsequently Wilder, *Christian Rhetoric*.

and Word of God,⁴⁵ in which he examined the literary purpose of the parable and epistle concluding that a parable is an extended metaphor while a letter is oral expression in written form. By analysis of form, style, and sequence, an author's intended message and emphasis as well as situation may be perceived.

It is often said, however, that modern rhetorical criticism of the Scriptures received its strongest impetus from James Muilenburg in his presidential address to the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968.⁴⁶ In this address Muilenburg highlighted some of the weaknesses of form criticism such as its inability to take full account of a text's peculiar and unique features and its difficulty in relating a text to its historical context. What was needed, according to Muilenburg, was an appreciation of the artistic techniques of the author and a diligent consideration of how the author had constructed from thought and imagination a text capable of communicating meaning.

Muilenburg's proposals were most influential on Old Testament scholarship which has since produced numerous works of rhetorical criticism, often by merging rhetorical, literary, and structuralist approaches in a unique and not infrequently esoteric form of discourse.⁴⁷

According to Mack, New Testament rhetorical criticism did not arise from Muilenburg or Wilder, but from the search in the 70's "for a way to move from

⁴⁵Funk, R. *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

⁴⁶See above, footnote 6.

⁴⁷For an extensive bibliography on the Old Testament and rhetoric see Watson and Hauser, *Comprehensive Bibliography*, 14-97; and House, P.R. *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), esp. 3-22.

texts to social histories".⁴⁸ There was great desire to reconstruct the text's sociological importance, to discover the secret of its persuasive power in the real world, to understand its effective, experiential power.

In many ways, the rhetorical analysis of the New Testament has followed a different trajectory from that applied to the Hebrew Bible. At an early stage it took a natural turn towards classical Greco-Roman rhetoric.⁴⁹ In 1968—the same year as Muilenburg's seminal address—E.A. Judge produced his article, "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice"⁵⁰, which raised the question of the influence of classical rhetorical concepts upon the Apostle and called for a systematic analysis of the rhetoric of the NT literature to be undertaken. Judge also pointed out that an author may write utilizing rhetorical form on a subconscious level, so that the question of the need for special training in rhetoric becomes irrelevant. In 1974 Karl Donfried, in an article entitled "False Propositions in the Study of Romans,"⁵¹ argued against Bultmann's thesis of Pauline reliance upon the form of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe, implying instead of necessary dependence that Paul may simply have been influenced by the prevailing culture.

In 1975 H.D. Betz produced the first rhetorical analysis of a New Testament

⁴⁸Mack, *Rhetoric*, 13.

⁴⁹This was in contrast to Wilder who had considered the classical literary world as wholly alien to the forms and functions of NT documents, as evidenced by such a statement as: "Even when we bring such basic categories into play as those of Aristotle we are moving in a different world" (*Christian Rhetoric*, 43). For a brief overview of the rhetoric of the Old and New Testaments from the view point of a classicist, see Kennedy, *Christian and Secular*, 120-132.

⁵⁰See above, footnote 15.

⁵¹Donfried, K. "False Propositions in the Study of Romans," *CBQ* 36 (1974), 332-55.

text by direct reliance upon Greco-Roman rhetorical theory. This was his article entitled, "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians"⁵² which he followed in 1979 with his Galatians commentary.⁵³ In his ground breaking article Betz, with an examination of the letter's structure and content in the light of classical rhetorical theory, concluded that many of the apparent problems perceived in the text evaporate when reconsidered from a rhetorical view point.⁵⁴

In 1976 Wilhelm Wuellner analyzed Romans in his article "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate Over Romans".⁵⁵ He concluded, after a thorough study of the letter's *exordium* and *peroratio*, that because of the argumentative nature of the document it should be primarily viewed rhetorically rather than from the perspective of either form or historical criticism. In the same article Wuellner also concluded that the structure

⁵²Betz, H.D. "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 21 (1975), 353-79; subsequently Betz, "Literary Composition".

⁵³Betz, H.D. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); subsequently Betz, *Galatians*.

⁵⁴Recently, Meynot, R. "Quelle rhétorique dans l'Épître aux Galates? Le cas de Ga. 4:12-20," *Rhet* 12 (1994), 427-450, has proposed a biblical rhetorical analysis of Galatians in opposition to Betz's classical rhetorical analysis, while J. Fairweather, "The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric: Parts 1 and 2," *TynBul* 45 (1994), 1-38, has suggested that John Chrysostom's commentary on Galatians presents a rhetorical analysis which should be regarded as a valuable alternative to Betz's. Chrysostom considered the epistle deliberative and proposed a different division of the argumentation from Betz.

⁵⁵Wuellner, W. "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate Over Romans," *CBQ* 38 (1976), 330-51; subsequently Wuellner, "Rhetoric of Argumentation".

of Paul's argumentation is the key to solving the problem of the letter's unity.⁵⁶ Wuellner found it essential to the letter's argumentation to include chapter 16 as authentic. His study shows the clear advantage of rhetorical criticism over unaided comparative epistolology.⁵⁷

In 1978 F.F. Church wrote "Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul's Letter to Philemon"⁵⁸ which relies upon Greco-Roman theories of invention and arrangement to perform an analysis of the letter. The next year Wuellner completed another important and interesting study into Paul's rhetorical skill with the publication of his "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation"⁵⁹ in which he examined the function of digressions in Paul's argumentation. His conclusions include, first, that Paul's digressions are used to indicate the main point of his argumentation (e.g. 1 Cor. 6:1-11) and, second, that in their structure they tend to move from the particular to the general (e.g. 1 Cor. 7:17-24). In this way Wuellner demonstrated that Paul's digressions actually show rhetorical sophistication and serve to bolster his argumentation.⁶⁰

⁵⁶See Wuellner, "Rhetoric of Argumentation", 350.

⁵⁷Ibid., 350: "Not theories of literary forms, but theories of rhetorical argumentation, will offer us solutions to the problems of Romans and to the problems we will have with *any* genre."

⁵⁸Church, F.F. "Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul's Letter to Philemon," *HTR* 71 (1978), 17-33.

⁵⁹Wuellner, W. "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition. In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, eds. W.R. Schoedel and R.L. Wilken (ThHist 53; Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 177-188.

⁶⁰See also Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 98: "Paul employed digressions as part of his style. They undergirded his main argument and reflected not on any lapses in his thought patterns, but functioned as a creative means of persuading his readers to believe and to accept his message."

In 1980 Charles Robbins employed classical rhetorical teachings on meter and rhythm in a re-examination of the versification of the Philippian Christ Hymn in his "Rhetorical Structure of Philippians 2:6-11".⁶¹ And in the same year W. Kurz argued in his article entitled "Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts"⁶² that Luke's adaptation of the Aristotelian enthymeme in his works suggests formal rhetorical training.

In 1982 attention was again focused upon the rhetoric of *Romans* with Robert Jewett's article "Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter"⁶³ in which he concurred with Wuellner that the letter is a form of epideictic rhetoric but goes on to specify the type of epideictic as 'ambassadorial'. Two years later M. Bünker published his rhetorical analysis of *1 Corinthians*, under the title, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1. Korintherbrief*.⁶⁴

In 1986 Charles Forbes published his "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric,"⁶⁵ in which he demonstrated the Apostle's high level of rhetorical skill.⁶⁶ In the same year Jewett

⁶¹Robbins, C. "Rhetorical Structure of Philippians 2:6-11," *CBQ* 42 (1980), 73-82.

⁶²Kurz, W. "Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts," *CBQ* 42 (1980), 171-95.

⁶³Jewett, R. "Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter," *Int* 36 (1982), 5-20; subsequently Jewett, "Ambassadorial".

⁶⁴Bünker, M. *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1. Korintherbrief* (GTA 28; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984).

⁶⁵Forbes, C. "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32 (1986), 1-30; subsequently Forbes, "Comparison".

⁶⁶Forbes, "Comparison", 2; see also Judge, "Paul's Boasting", 37, as well as his "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community: Part II," *JRelH* 1 (1961), 136.

came out with his rhetorical commentary titled, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*.⁶⁷

Since the late 80's there has been an explosion in the number of studies employing either or both ancient and modern rhetoric, often in conjunction with other interpretive approaches. To list and summarize all of these works goes beyond the boundaries of the present study.⁶⁸ Surprisingly, however, very little work has been done on the rhetoric of Colossians.⁶⁹ In Watson's 80 page bibliography on

⁶⁷Jewett, R. *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

⁶⁸For an extensive listing see Watson and Hauser, *Comprehensive Bibliography*, 126-206.

⁶⁹Two rhetorical analyses of Colossians came to my attention at too late a date to be properly treated in this study, but are summarized briefly here.

Neesley, J.W. "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Epistle to the Colossians," (Ph.D. diss.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994), uses a modified Kennedian methodology to examine the epistle. He concludes that Colossians is predominantly deliberative with supporting epideictic, while the exigence consists of the heretical doctrines of legalistic and mystical Judaism. His outline of the epistle is as follows: A) an *insinuatio* (1:1-2:5) is employed to meet the difficult exigence. Emphasis is placed upon the relationship in Christ and confession shared by Paul and his audience. B) The *probatio* (2:6-3:4) which begins with a *propositio* in 2:6-8 for the audience to continue in the spiritual life as they began. The *probatio* is further divided into a *confirmatio* (2:6-7; 9-15; 3:1-4) and a *reprehensio* (2:8; 16-23). The goal of the *probatio* is to prove the superiority of the believers' relationship with Christ over the opponents' legalism, asceticism, and mysticism. The epistle concludes with C) a *peroratio* (3:5-4:18) which first amplifies the relational nature of the Christian life through exhortations to ethical living (3:5-4:6), and finally ends with an appeal to ethos in the closing greetings (4:7-18).

Olbricht, T.H. "The Stoicheia and the Rhetoric of Colossians: Then and Now," 308-328 in *Rhetoric, Scripture, and Theology* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996), eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht, rejects Pauline authorship for the letter. Although he identifies its genre as deliberative or perhaps epideictic, but with some judicial features, he really thinks it should be classified as the "continual" form of "church rhetoric" (classifications he has invented himself). He acknowledges that the threat of heresy seems to be external, as suggested by Hooker and proposes an eleven point outline: 1) an introduction which identifies the noteworthy features of the writer and recipients (1:1-2); 2) the author's declaration of praise for the audience and appeal to their good will (1:3-8); 3) the author's profession of his best interests for the audience (1:9-14); 4) declaration that the author and audience are allied in common participation with the Son (1:15-20); 5) declaration of the letter's purpose: to challenge the audience to continue in this relationship (1:21-23; 2:6-7; 4:2); 6) proclamation that the author is fulfilling his commission to the audience despite suffering (1:24-2:5); 7) call to the audience not to become side-tracked, but rather sustained in Christ (2:8-15); 8) statement by the author that the current challenges to their views faced by the audience are deleterious (2:16-23); 9) declaration that tasks remain in fleshing out the ramifications of the Christ event (3:1-

NT rhetorical criticism, Colossians is allotted half a page with seven references.⁷⁰ Of these seven only one, van der Watt's study of the epistle's *exordium*,⁷¹ is an actual attempt at rhetorical analysis. The remaining six references include two stylistic analyses, one discourse analysis, two works on rhetorical devices, and Melancthon's commentary of 1527 (mentioned above). Two additional works touching upon the rhetoric of Colossians which Watson fails to mention are Hatfield's unpublished doctoral dissertation on New Testament vice and virtue lists,⁷² and Aletti's recent commentary on the letter, *Saint Paul: Épître aux Colossiens*.⁷³ J.W. Welch has also written on some of the epistle's chiasmic structures.⁷⁴

III. METHODOLOGY

Muilenburg was the first to propose a basic methodology for rhetorical

4:6); 10) encouragement from fellow believers (4:7-17); and 11) the author's characteristics and benediction (4:18). It should be noted that Olbricht believes the "Christ hymn" to have been pre-existent and minimally changed by the author of Colossians. He views 2:6-7 as equivalent to a *propositio*, although it serves more as a summary and re-iteration of the purpose of the letter which was to encourage the continuation of a commitment and style of life and to counteract the power of deviate beliefs. These deviant beliefs Olbricht characterizes as syncretistic philosophy.

⁷⁰Watson and Hauser, *Comprehensive Bibliography*, 199.

⁷¹J.G. van der Watt, "Colossians 1:3-12 Considered as an *Exordium*," *JThSoA* 57 (1986), 32-42; subsequently van der Watt, "Exordium".

⁷²See above, footnote 4.

⁷³Aletti, J.-N. *Saint Paul: Épître aux Colossiens* (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie., 1993); subsequently Aletti, *Colossiens*.

⁷⁴Welch, J.W. "Chiasmus in the New Testament," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. J.W. Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), 222-225.

criticism. The first step of his method is to establish the boundaries of the literary unit to be studied and to identify its predominant theme. Next, the structure of the unit and the organization of its parts must be discovered. Finally, the rhetorical devices which serve as markers of transition and sequence within the text are to be identified.

Since Muilenburg the methodology of New Testament rhetorical criticism has, in general, developed in three directions: in the direction of classical rhetorical theory, in the direction of the "new rhetoric" developed in the past 40 years, and in a direction which seeks in various ways to combine the two.⁷⁵

A. CLASSICAL RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Rhetorical analysis based upon Greco-Roman oratorical theory tends to be more historically oriented.⁷⁶ It recognizes that the NT arose out of an historical situation which was influenced by both Judaism and Hellenism, and inevitably by Greco-Roman rhetoric. We may use classical works as an instrument for interpreting the texts of the NT both because the ancients not only practiced rhetoric in the form of speeches and letters which have come down to us as useful sources, but also because their rhetors wrote systematic textbooks and treatises which have been preserved. The extensive conceptualization of rhetoric in classical times provides a

⁷⁵See further, Stamps, D. "Rhetorical Criticism and the Rhetoric of New Testament Criticism," *JTL* 6 (1992), 268-279 and Anderson, R.D., Jr. *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (Kampen: Pharos, 1996), 13-28.

⁷⁶See further, Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33-38; Lambrecht, "Rhetorical Criticism"; Mack, *Rhetoric*, 25-48; Watson, *Jude*, 8-28; Watson and Hauser *Comprehensive Bibliography*, 109-112; and Wuellner, "Where?"

ready means for analyzing the New Testament. In this way, the place of the NT in its oral and literary context may be better appreciated and brought to bear upon its interpretation. Greco-Roman rhetorical criticism considers the historical situation which led to the creation of a text and it aims at enabling the interpreter to read and react to the persuasive power of the text as would its original audience. It assumes that the New Testament authors were influenced by classical rhetoric, either from formal training or unconsciously from the infusion of hellenistic culture and thought into their world. Greco-Roman rhetorical criticism recognizes the biblical texts as complex wholes, characterized by cohesive argumentation.

The American scholar of classics, George A. Kennedy, was the first to propose and implement a methodology for the classical rhetorical study of the New Testament with the publication in 1984 of his book *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*.⁷⁷

According to Kennedy,⁷⁸ before a rhetorical analysis proper can begin, certain preliminary steps must first be completed. These preliminary steps include 1) the determination of the boundaries of the rhetorical unit to be analyzed, which may also include identification of smaller units within a text if one is working on a larger and more complex unit; 2) an analysis of the rhetorical situation which gave rise to the discourse, as well as identification of any rhetorical problems, or the

⁷⁷See above, footnote 3.

⁷⁸Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33-38; cf. Hester, J.D. "Placing the Blame: The Presence of Epideictic in Galatians 1 and 2," in *Persuasive Artistry*, ed. D. Watson (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1991), 285; subsequently Hester, "Placing the Blame".

overriding rhetorical problem (if any), which the orator faced in effectively accomplishing his rhetorical task; and 3) the identification of the *quaestiones*, *stasis*, and *genus* of the text (these terms will be more thoroughly defined and discussed below), the correct identification of which may be crucial to a complete and proper understanding of the text and the intent of the author.⁷⁹

Following the preliminary investigations the rhetorical analysis proper is undertaken. This consists of an in-depth study of the means of persuasion used by the author (*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*) and of the rhetorical arrangement of the parts and subdivisions of the rhetorical unit⁸⁰ and its argumentation, observing its progression and adaptation throughout the course of the oration. It involves consideration of the figures, tropes, and types of style employed by the writer and of why the writer chose to incorporate these very materials in this very manner in the invention of his discourse. It involves perceiving how the particular arrangement and the persuasive rhetorical devices work to meet the rhetorical exigence of the discourse.

Following this, Kennedy recommends an evaluation of the rhetorical effectiveness of the unit analyzed: does the discourse created by the author appear effective in altering or eliminating the rhetorical exigence? And what implications

⁷⁹Although Kennedy recommends the identification of a discourse's *genus* as one of the steps in the process of rhetorical criticism (*NT Interpretation*, 36), he likewise notes that "identification of genre is not a crucial factor in understanding how rhetoric actually works in units of the New Testament," (*NT Interpretation*, 33).

⁸⁰It should be noted that although rhetorical divisions often run parallel to grammatical structures they may violate them. One rhetorical part may end and another begin within the same paragraph or even within the same sentence. The determining factors are topic and development of argumentation, not grammatical structure.

does this hold for the speaker and his audience.

To some degree Kennedy's formula for a rhetorical analysis is a circular rather than linear process of discovery. For instance, as a rhetorical critic looks at the arrangement of materials he is very likely to discover something about the exigence which created the discourse, and as he considers the forms of arguments used he is sure to uncover details about the rhetorical situation facing the author, and so on.

An adaptation of Kennedy's approach is followed by Hatfield who proposes a three stage methodology which concentrates upon the functions of both the "microlevel" and the "macrolevel" in order to understand the persuasive nature of the text.⁸¹ In the first stage the function of situation (a macrolevel concern) is examined. This involves defining the limits of the literary unit to be studied (a rhetorical unit has a discernable beginning and end connected by cohesive action or argumentation). Discerning any possible sources behind the unit is not a primary goal. Next the rhetorical situation (i.e. historical context) must be established. The second stage examines the function of arrangement (also a macrolevel concern): how did the author arrange his material and structure his arguments? This incorporates elements from both rhetorical invention and arrangement. The text is examined for evidence of "progression and cohesion", that is, the argumentation should develop and yet remain logically and thematically unified. Hatfield's third stage seeks to comprehend the function of the text's style (a microlevel concern): what rhetorical

⁸¹See Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function," 123-130.

purpose do the figures and types of style suggest?

The classical rhetorical approach has been criticized on several points. Some scholars contend that Kennedy has overestimated the extent of the influence of ancient rhetoric on first century Palestinian Judaism, and so have questioned the legitimacy of analyzing Jewish works according to Gentile theory. Following from this objection, it is argued that both Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity had their own rhetoric with their own rules which Kennedy's Greco-Roman rhetorical criticism has yet to come fully to terms with, and therefore Kennedy's method may completely overlook important features in the NT documents. Some scholars have questioned the degree to which ancient letters, which concern written rather than oral language, reflect ancient rhetorical theory and practice. And further, some have pointed to the danger of forcing biblical texts into classical categories, whether or not they are applicable.

These criticisms do demonstrate potential weaknesses in the classical approach. Nevertheless, such criticisms must not be allowed to overshadow certain facts. First, ancient rhetorical theory was meant to be flexible according to the needs of the situation at hand and was not to be considered as a rigid set of rules which every writer or speaker was expected to follow. This was acknowledged by the rhetors themselves.⁸² In other words, Greco-Roman theory should prove flexible enough to be applied to early Christian writings. And second, in so far as a Jewish

⁸²See, for example, *InstOr* 2,13,1ff.

or Christian rhetoric exists apart from Greco-Roman rhetoric⁸³ it has yet to be systematically defined to any extent in contrast to classical rhetoric. The vast bulk of sources, terminology, and theory belong to classical rhetoric and until this situation changes most study must rely upon ancient or modern rhetoric. The question concerning the applicability of rhetoric to written documents such as epistles will be dealt with below. Keeping in mind the potential pitfalls described by these criticisms, a classical rhetorical analysis properly performed can still elucidate the rhetorical features already present in a text, while guarding against forcing that text into any preconceived categories or forms.

B. MODERN RHETORICAL CRITICISM

For many rhetorical critics of the New Testament, classical rhetorical theory is seen as too limited.⁸⁴ They argue that advances and developments in rhetorical theory have been made in the past 2,000 years, especially in the past 50 years, and that these should be taken advantage of in any rhetorical analysis of the NT. Classical theory did not and could not give an account of all aspects of human language. These critics draw upon the works and ideas of such scholars of "new

⁸³M.C.McGee in "Thematic Reduplication in Christian Rhetoric," *QJS* 52 (1970), 196-198 does propose that Christian rhetoric is in a system of its own apart from Greek rhetoric.

⁸⁴See Botha, "Reinvention", 14-31; Classen, C.J. "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik," *ZNW* 82 (1991), 1-32; Hansen, G.W. *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSS 29; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1989), 56-57; Pogołoff, *Logos and Sophia*, 7-35; Wuellner, "Narrative Rhetoric", 171-185.

rhetoric" as Perelman,⁸⁵ Burke,⁸⁶ and Brandt.⁸⁷

Modern rhetorical criticism has been criticized for its sometimes low emphasis placed on historical concerns and its chronological separation from the New Testament documents themselves. It holds the danger of being anachronistic, of pressing the texts, their authors, and original audiences into twentieth century cultural, psychological, and philosophical ways of thinking and acting.⁸⁸

Classical rhetorical criticism and modern ("new") rhetorical criticism are not opposed to one another. Both share many points in common. Both are concerned with rhetoric as it affects the argumentation and persuasive intent of texts, rather than merely its ornamental features. Both take interest in the social and cultural values underlying the author's choice of argumentation. And both seek to understand the exigence which motivated the author to write.⁸⁹ For this reason many scholars integrate the two in their research.⁹⁰

In this study I have chosen, in so far as is possible and profitable, to follow

⁸⁵Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*; Perelman, C. *L'Empire rhétorique: Rhétorique et argumentation* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1977), trans. W. Kluback, *The Realm of Rhetoric* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982); subsequently Perelman, *Realm of Rhetoric*.

⁸⁶Burke, K. *The Rhetoric of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

⁸⁷Brandt, W.J. *The Rhetoric of Argumentation* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970); subsequently Brandt, *Rhetoric of Argumentation*.

⁸⁸See Mitchell, M.M. *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991), 7.

⁸⁹See Thurén, L. *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions*, (Åbo, Finland: Åbo Academy, 1990), 55; Wuellner, "Narrative Rhetoric", 176-177.

⁹⁰See Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 25; Watson and Hauser, *Comprehensive Bibliography*, 109-115.

Kennedy's classical rhetorical approach since his methodology is the most clearly, simply, and systematically set out and has been followed successfully in several studies of NT epistles. On occasion I will note points from other rhetorical methods, but not on any regular basis. Several types of rhetorical analysis could be performed upon Colossians: an Aristotelian, a Ciceronian, a Burkean—to name but a few. These must be left to others.

IV. THE ORIGINS AND SOURCES OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC

According to tradition the science of rhetoric began when men "observed situations in real life where eloquence succeeded, analyzed the resources used by such speakers, and developed a teaching method which could impart those skills".⁹¹ According to Cicero it was first on the island of Sicily that human eloquence was developed into a systematized τέχνη by two enterprising individuals, Corax and Tisias.⁹² Tisias is said to have been the teacher of several influential rhetoricians, including Gorgias of Leontini⁹³ and Isocrates. Plato reacted harshly to the amoral

⁹¹Vickers, B. *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 1; subsequently Vickers, *In Defence*; cf. *InstOr* 3,2,3.

⁹²*Brut* 12,46; possibly relying on Aristotle's now lost *Συναγωγή τῶν τεχνῶν*. Following the expulsion of the tyrants in 467 B.C., there arose numerous lawsuits over property rights brought forth by citizens who had been banished under the former government. Considering the great need of the claimants, Corax and Tisias—his pupil—drew up a systematic outline of rhetorical techniques and a set of rules dealing with those questions which were most likely to arise in court and taught them to the eager claimants. Thus Corax was the first known author of a rhetorical handbook, or τέχνη.

N.B.: All references to classical authors are from the editions of the Loeb Classical Library unless stated otherwise. The reader is directed to the Bibliography and List of Abbreviations for more detailed information.

⁹³Gorgias is also said to have been a pupil of the philosopher Empedocles whom Aristotle in his now lost *Sophist* is said to have considered to have been the true founder of the scientific study of rhetoric (see Freese's introduction to his translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, [LCL; Cambridge:

rhetoric of sophists such as Tisias and Gorgias, as is clearly seen in his dialogue entitled *Gorgias*.⁹⁴ He, in contrast, proposed a moral-philosophical form of rhetoric, emphasizing that oratory should be based upon knowledge and truth rather than upon flattery, opinion, or mere appearances. The goal of legitimate rhetoric is virtue and righteousness.⁹⁵ Plato seems to have been the first to realize that an understanding of the human soul is the basis for understanding oratory.⁹⁶ He proposed that this be achieved through dialectic.⁹⁷

What Plato suggested his pupil Aristotle attempted to incorporate into his *Art of Rhetoric*, which was compiled about 330 B.C. By this time the formal study of rhetoric was already over 100 years old in the Greek world. Aristotle's theories elevated the importance of the human soul and logical argumentation (particularly in the use of the *enthymeme* as the oratorical form of dialectic) above stylistics in the process of persuasion. Aristotle's interests were more pragmatic than Plato's.

Harvard University Press, repr. 1991], xiii). Gorgias first came to Athens as an ambassador in 427 B.C. where he amazed the Greeks with his poetical, highly ornamented, rhythmic oratory. He taught that the objective of rhetoric is persuasion, not virtue or wisdom, and he boasted that he could speak persuasively for or against any subject whatever.

⁹⁴*Gorg* 463,a-b. For more on the disputes in classical times over the function and essence of rhetoric, see Douglas, A.E. in his introduction to *Ciceronis Brutus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), xxvi-xliii; Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 42-51; Kroll, W. "Rhetorik" in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1940), sup. vol. 7, cols. 1039-1138.

⁹⁵*Gorg* 527,c.

⁹⁶*Phdr* 271,a.

⁹⁷According to Plato (*Phdr* 271), an orator must first learn the essential nature of the soul—whether its structure is homogeneous or complex. Second, he must learn how the soul acts and how it is acted upon. Third, he must classify all types of speeches and all types of souls (which are of a finite number) and the ways in which souls can be affected. And fourth, he must be able to identify in real life both the type of soul of his audience and the type of speech to which that soul will respond.

He freely borrowed material and ideas from the sophists. And he assigned oratory to a place among the other arts worthy of scientific study, such as politics and ethics, and stressed its usefulness in the daily social interactions of the *polis*. He is the first known to have categorized into three the types of rhetorical discourses and to have preferred the deliberative genus—the rhetoric of political debate—to the judicial. Aristotle's, along with the oratorical works of Cicero and Quintilian, remains among the most famous and influential of the numerous rhetorical manuals produced during the classical period. Unfortunately the rhetorical manuals of most earlier rhetors have only survived in fragments.

Several of Aristotle's other works also touch upon elements of rhetorical theory, including his *Poetics* and his works on logic such as the *Categories* and the *Topica*, a treatise in eight books which deals with the invention and evaluation of arguments.

Apparently written at about the same time as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, but from a sophistic point of view, is the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* which was falsely attributed to Aristotle. It is thought by some to be the work of Anaximenes of Lampsacus,⁹⁸ a contemporary, who was a rhetorician, historian, and, like Aristotle himself, tutor and friend of Alexander the Great. It lacks the moral, philosophical, psychological, and logical concerns of Aristotle's handbook, but probably gives a more accurate insight into pre-Aristotelian, sophistic rhetoric such as was taught and practiced by men like Gorgias and Isocrates.

⁹⁸This supposition is based upon *InstOr* 3,4,9 which describes Anaximenes' theory of rhetorical *genera* which resembles that set forth in the *RhetAlex*.

More influential than Aristotle in the teaching of oratory, Isocrates centered his system of education around rhetoric.⁹⁹ He emphasized the importance of combining the elements of nature (natural predisposition), instruction, and practice in creating a skilled orator. The function of the teacher of rhetoric is to explain the principles of the art and to provide worthy examples for his students to imitate. In this way Isocrates was the first to practice and promote literary rhetoric. Generally speaking, it is the practical-educational Isocratean form of rhetoric which predominated in classical times and which was advocated by later rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian.

Many refinements and advances were made in rhetorical theory during the Hellenistic period (such as Hermagoras' *stasis* theory). The importance and influence of the highly developed science of rhetoric spread throughout the Greek world and beyond. Keen interest in rhetoric began to grow among the Romans as their power and wealth expanded into the Hellenistic regions of the Mediterranean and as their need for philosophical and technical knowledge increased. From the first century B.C. we have two Latin rhetorical manuals which share many points in common and are both based upon Hellenistic rhetoric. These are Cicero's *De Inventione* and a work falsely attributed to him, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. The authorship and date of *AdHer* is uncertain.¹⁰⁰ Its style is simple, clear, concise.

⁹⁹His rhetorical-educational theory is most fully set out in his *Antidosis*; while in *Against the Sophists* he attempted to differentiate his school from that of the bombastic successors of Gorgias.

¹⁰⁰Some scholars attribute the work to a certain Cornificius because of similarities in the book with a number of references in the *InstOr* to the work of Cornificius. But the discrepancies between *AdHer* and the references from Cornificius are as numerous as the similarities. Caplan, in his introduction to the Loeb edition of *AdHer* (p.xxvi) proposes a date for the work between 86-82 B.C.,

The content is thoroughly Greek and eclectic, but practical. Cicero composed his *DeInv* in his youth, probably in 91 B.C. or shortly thereafter, apparently from lecture notes. In his later life he criticized the work as "unfinished and crude".¹⁰¹ As the title suggests, it deals only with invention, the first of the five "duties" of the orator.

Cicero wrote a number of other rhetorical works which have survived. The *De Oratore*, written in 55 B.C., he thought highly of.¹⁰² It is an exposition of his rhetorical theories in dialogue form. The *Brutus* covers the history of Roman oratory and defends Cicero's oratorical style against the limitations of pure Atticism. The *Orator* is an attempt to describe the perfect orator. *De Partitione Oratoria* is another work in dialogue form. It is a concise and technical presentation of the art of rhetoric ostensibly dedicated by Cicero to his son, Marcus, and written in 46 or 45 B.C. Less important works include *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*, and the *Topica*, which is in actuality more a treatise on invention than on rhetorical topics.

But undoubtedly the largest, most comprehensive, and most useful ancient manual for New Testament rhetorical criticism is the *Institutio Oratoria* of Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, written in the final decade of the first century A.D. Quintilian draws on all the major Greek and Latin rhetoricians, often summarizing and giving critiques of their teachings. He writes on the education of an orator and engages in

based upon internal evidence.

¹⁰¹*DeOr* 1,2,5 "inchoata ac rudia".

¹⁰²"It is the same, too, in my three books *De Oratore*, of which I think very highly..." (*Sunt etiam "de oratore" nostri tres mihi vehementer probati*), *AdAtt* 13,19,4.

literary criticism. The breadth and quality of his treatment and the close date of his writing to the date of the composition of Colossians make this work invaluable to this present study.

In the area of epideictic rhetoric, perhaps the most complete ancient source is the work attributed to a certain rhetorician by the name of Menander and written c. 300 A.D., known as *Menander Rhetor*.¹⁰³

Several important treatises on rhetorical style exist, including *On the Sublime*, which was often attributed to the rhetorician and philosopher of the third century A.D., Cassius Longinus, but was probably written in the late first century A.D. by an unknown author. As the title suggests, it describes only one type of style. The work *On Style*, attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum (fl. c. 300 B.C.) but more likely written at a later date, perhaps in the first century A.D., seems to follow the rhetorical dogma of the Peripatetics, especially Aristotle and his pupil Theophrastus, though it may also contain Stoic elements. It divides style into four types: plain, elevated, elegant, and forcible. It also contains a brief discussion on epistolary style. Another extant work on style is that by the famous rhetor of the third century A.D., Hermogenes of Tarsus, entitled *On Types of Style*¹⁰⁴ which distinguishes several types of rhetorical styles. Another influential work by the same

¹⁰³*Menander Rhetor*, eds., trans., and commentary by D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981); subsequently *MenRhet*.

¹⁰⁴*Peri Ideon: Hermogenes' On Types of Style*, trans. C.W. Wooten (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

author is an in-depth study into *stasis* theory, entitled *On Stasis*.¹⁰⁵

We also have available several *progymnasmata*, or preliminary exercises for students, the most important of which were written between the 1st and 5th centuries A.D. A major objective of the *progymnasmata* was to teach students how to create effective arguments. Their curriculum began with more simple tasks such as the paraphrasing of a text and progressed on to more complex and difficult exercises such as the creation of elaborated arguments (ἐργασίᾱ). Perhaps the most important *progymnasmata* for NT rhetorical criticism is that of Aelius Theon of Alexandria (c. 50-100 A.D.). Other *progymnasmata* of importance are that of Aphthonius¹⁰⁶ and that of Hermogenes,¹⁰⁷ which includes a very useful exercise for the elaboration of a chreia to form a "complete argument".¹⁰⁸ The chreia may have originated with the cynic philosopher Diogenes who was famous for his brief, pithy retorts and who is said to have taught his students to use the chreia as a short-cut to memorization. Elaboration of arguments was taught well before NT times as is evident from the *Ad Herennium* and the chreia was known and used by the rabbis

¹⁰⁵"Hermogenes' *On Stasis*: A Translation with an Introduction and Notes", trans. R. Nadeau, *SpMono* 31 (1964), 361-424.

¹⁰⁶"The Progymnasmata of Aphthonius," trans. R. Nadeau, *SpMono* 19 (1952), 265-285; subsequently Nadeau, "Progymnasmata of Aphthonius".

¹⁰⁷"The Progymnasmata of Hermogenes," in *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (to 1400)*, C.S. Baldwin (New York: Macmillan, 1928; repr. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1959), 23-38; subsequently Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric*.

¹⁰⁸A chreia consists essentially of an identified person and a proverbial or witty remark attributed to him. It often includes situational information. For instance: In describing how a prince should rule, Machiavelli said, "Princes should assign unpopular duties to others, but bestow favors themselves."

in Jesus' time.¹⁰⁹

Recently a number of ancient texts touching upon epistolary theory and style have been collected and edited by A.J. Malherbe in his *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*,¹¹⁰ among which are works by Julius Victor, Pseudo-Libanius, and Philostratus of Lemnos.

The secondary sources dealing with ancient rhetoric are too numerous to be summarized here.¹¹¹

V. EPISTOLARY RHETORIC

Although these precepts of ancient rhetoric are clearly designed to train boys and young men to win audiences by addressing them orally in public, we must recall that from the earliest times, these precepts also guided those who addressed the public in writing. The epistles of St. Paul and Seneca, whether read aloud to groups or passed from hand to hand in manuscript, derive their structure and style from the same precepts of rhetoric as do the speeches of Demosthenes or Cicero.¹¹²

How applicable to a written medium like an epistle are the guidelines developed for oral discourse? Did rhetorical theory play a part in ancient letter writing?

¹⁰⁹See Fischel, H.A. "Studies in Cynicism and the Ancient Near East: The Transformation of a *Chria*," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, ed. J. Neusner (SHR 14; Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1968), 372-411, and Buchanan, G.W. "Chreias in the New Testament" in *Logia: Les Paroles de Jésus*, ed. J. Delobel (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), 503.

¹¹⁰Malherbe, A.J. *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); subsequently Malherbe, *Theorists*.

¹¹¹A brief list of those useful to New Testament rhetorical analysis is given in Watson and Hauser, *Comprehensive Bibliography*, 129-143.

¹¹²Clark, M.L. *Rhetoric at Rome: A Historical Survey* (London: Cohen & West, 1953), 142.

First, it is important at this point to emphasize again the differences between epistolography (or epistolology) and epistolary rhetoric. Epistolography is concerned with the comparison of the NT epistles with the many surviving letters from antiquity chiefly for the purpose of discovering parallels of genre, structure, and the like to the end that the letters of the NT may be better understood within the historical and cultural world in which they were written. Epistolary rhetoric on the other hand is concerned primarily with the art of persuasion as it occurs in letters, which are viewed as an extension or alternative to the main field of oratory, the spoken word. Epistolary rhetoric may carry out its task by reference to ancient and modern rhetorical theory, to the ancient epistolary manuals (although they contain little rhetorical information), or by comparison with the rhetorical strategy of other letters.

The classical manuals of rhetoric spend little time discussing letters or their rhetorical nature. However, it is known that the writing of letters in accordance with good rhetorical style was a part of ancient rhetorical theory. Students were taught to imitate the styles of the orator, historian, and philosopher in their letters, even though letters seem to have been despised as a lower form of oratory.¹¹³

The oldest extant treatment of epistolary theory is that mentioned above contained within the work *On Style* (4,223-235) attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum (c. 354-283 BC), but almost certainly from a later date, although possibly from as

¹¹³Cf. Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 31 and *InstOr* 10,1 and 2.

early as the second century BC.¹¹⁴ Actual handbooks for instruction in letter writing survive from the early middle ages. These are characterized by their heavy reliance upon the style of Cicero.¹¹⁵ Malherbe claims that letter writing was practiced in classical times even in elementary education as an exercise in style.¹¹⁶ As examples he offers *Typoi Epistolikoi* and *Epistolimaioi Characteres*, although these both probably date to the fourth century A.D. or later. The *Typoi Epistolikoi* describes 21 kinds of letters, includes examples of each, and concludes with a discussion of principles of style in letter writing. The *Epistolimaioi Characteres* consists of five divisions: 1) the definition of a letter, 2) a list of 41 types of letters, 3) definitions for each type of letter, 4) instructions regarding style, and 5) a brief model of each type of letter.¹¹⁷

That letters in the ancient world were essentially oral in nature and so subject

¹¹⁴W.R. Roberts, in his introduction to the text and translation in the Loeb edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 271ff., proposes that the author of *On Style* (Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας) was in fact Demetrius of Tarsus who was a contemporary of Plutarch in the late first century AD.

¹¹⁵E.g. Murphy, J.J., ed. *Rationes dictandi, Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 1-25; and also by Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 194-268.

¹¹⁶Malherbe, *Theorists*, 4; for more on the content of the *progymnasmata*, see *InstOr* 1,9,1-6; cf. Marrou, H.I. *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1948); trans. G. Lamb, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956; repr. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 172-173; and Bonner, S.F. *Education in Ancient Rome: From the elder Cato to the younger Pliny* (London: Methuen, 1977), 250-276.

¹¹⁷For further on ancient epistolary practice and theory and on the relationship of rhetorical analysis to letters see: Johanson, B.C. *To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians* (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), 42-43; Malherbe, *Theorists*, and his *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); Stowers, S.K. *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986) (subsequently Stowers, *Letter Writing*); White, J.L. *Light from Ancient Letters* (FFNT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) (subsequently White, *Ancient Letters*).

to theories of oral rhetoric should not be overlooked.¹¹⁸ This is seen in the fact that letters were often viewed as representing one half of a conversation.¹¹⁹ In most cases the letter had to serve as a suitable substitute for the writer's actual presence. Reading also was a practice which was done aloud.¹²⁰

Since the writer could not respond to his audience's reactions by immediate explanation or answer questions which might be raised by his letter, it was acknowledged that the prudent writer would attempt to anticipate the impact of what he said and adjust the trajectory of his thought to meet his conception of the audience's response.¹²¹ This observation is equally valid when examining the New Testament writings.¹²²

The usefulness of the treatises on letter writing for New Testament rhetorical criticism has, however, been questioned.¹²³ The ancient classifications of letters are both late and intended for professional letter writers, and their divisions often

¹¹⁸See Hester, "Placing the Blame", 305-306; this is more fully discussed in a fascinating article on ancient reading and writing by Achtemeier, P.J. "Omne verbum sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *JBL* 109 (1990), 3-27.

¹¹⁹Cf. *Style* 4,223.

¹²⁰N.B. Augustine, on a famous occasion, was surprised when he saw Ambrose reading without speaking the words; *Conf* 6,3.

¹²¹This is why argumentation rather than style has become the main focus of rhetorical criticism, with emphasis being placed upon the role of style as a device of argumentation.

¹²²"To a greater extent than any modern text, the Bible retained an oral and linear quality for its audience....the rhetorical qualities inherent in the text were originally intended to have an impact on first hearing and to be heard by a group." Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 5-6.

¹²³N.B. Kennedy's reservations about the usefulness of categorizing NT documents in accordance with ancient epistolary forms: "Though the New Testament epistles observe conventions such as the salutation, it may be a mistake to try to classify individual epistles within a traditional scheme of classical letter forms..." *NT Interpretation*, 32.

are subcategories of the three Aristotelian *genera*. Attempts to fit NT letters into the epistolary types often seem forced.¹²⁴ This study is more concerned with identifying the rhetorical genre of Colossians than its epistolographic genre. The intent is not to list, compare, and evaluate the numerous and divergent epistolary genres or to attempt so narrowly to define Colossians unless the document itself should suggest such a classification.

In summation then, there existed amongst rhetoricians limited concern for rhetorical form and style in letters in classical times.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, letters for the most part are rhetorical documents, especially when we are speaking of the Pauline corpus of the NT, the letters of which to a great degree possess sermon-like qualities. Although ancient rhetoricians wrote little specifically on theories of epistolary rhetoric, their general rhetorical theories are applicable to letters as they are applicable to most (if not all) human discourse, but especially to discourse intended to persuade. Still, in engaging in a rhetorical analysis of a NT document the critic should hold in mind that his main sources of rhetorical theory, the

¹²⁴Among the interesting, yet unconvincing, attempts are Jewett's identification of Romans as an ambassadorial letter of the epideictic *genus* (Jewett, "Ambassadorial", 5-20) and Betz's identification of Galatians as an apologetic letter of the judicial *genus* (Betz, "Literary Composition", 353-379).

¹²⁵Criticism of NT rhetorical analysis upon this point is often misdirected since rhetorical criticism is dependent neither upon the species of document (here the epistle) having been treated by the rhetors, nor upon an author's having been oratorically trained. J.T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), for example, falls into this fallacy in his critique of rhetorical analysis, pp. 156-168 and 442-454; (subsequently Reed, *Discourse Analysis*).

Most practitioners of epistolary analysis have been sympathetic to the need for and usefulness of rhetorical criticism. For example: Stowers, S.K. "Letters (Greek and Latin)," *ABD*, vol.4, 292; White, J.L. "Apostolic Mission and Apostolic Message: Congruence in Paul's Epistolary Rhetoric, Structure, and Imagery," in *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Honor of John C. Hurd*, ed. B.H. McLean (JSNTS 86; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1993), 148f.

rhetorical manuals, are primarily concerned with a description of judicial speeches (Aristotle's *Rhetoric* being the major exception). Furthermore, it is unlikely that Paul had formal training in rhetoric. He may well have been aware of basic rhetorical concepts from a grammar school education or from their general dissemination throughout the Greco-Roman world, but it is improbable (from his own accounts and the comments of several Church Fathers) that he ever studied "higher" rhetoric. We should most reasonably assume, therefore, that Paul did not rely upon the rhetorical manuals as a prescription for what and how he wrote. His was an unconscious rhetoric. We can, however, use the manuals to describe and dissect what he wrote since they offer a standard by which the persuasive power of his letters upon a first century Mediterranean audience may be gauged.

Comparative epistology has a role to play in clarifying the frame and conventions of a letter like Colossians, while rhetorical criticism can clarify the function of the letter's structure, argumentation, and content.

VI. CONCLUSION TO THE INTRODUCTION

A. OBJECTIVES

Rhetorical criticism is more than identifying and analyzing the functions of rhetorical forms and devices. Its chief objectives are to understand the intent of the author and the power and effect of the text upon the original audience.¹²⁶ Kennedy

¹²⁶"Better than any other modern critical approach [rhetorical criticism] brings to comprehension...what all exegetical methods want 'to explain'—the text's power." Olbricht, T.H. quoting W. Wuellner in "An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, eds. W. Meeks, D. Balch, and E. Fergusson

states:

Rhetorical criticism takes the text as we have it, whether the work of a single author or the product of editing, and looks at it from the point of view of the author's or editor's intent, the unified results, and how it would be perceived by an audience of near contemporaries....The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the discovery of the author's intent and how that is transmitted through a text to an audience.¹²⁷

In addition to this, since no extensive rhetorical analysis has ever been performed on Colossians, it is possible that a number of new insights into the epistle can be gained from this study. It is hoped that light can be shed upon the interpretation of obscure or difficult passages¹²⁸ and that clues can be gathered as to the letter's authorship and structure (including signs of redaction, incorporation of secondary or traditional materials), since examination of a discourse's rhetorical arrangement and argumentation may indicate whether it has undergone redaction or whether traditional or secondary materials have been inserted. In this way rhetorical analysis may provide clues to the authorship and unity of a discourse. It is also possible that the sociological, historical, cultural, and intellectual milieu in which and from which the epistle was fashioned will become more clear as the progression and objectives of its argumentation are unraveled, since an epistle, speech, or

(Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 216; subsequently Olbrecht, "Aristotelian Analysis".

¹²⁷Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 4 and 12, cf. 33.

¹²⁸Betz laments the fact that "scholars of the later twentieth century seem in basic agreement that Paul's letters are 'confused', disagreeing only about whether the confusion is caused by emotional disturbances, 'Diktierpausen' or 'rabbinic' methodology". According to Betz, however, rhetorical analysis reveals a well-conceived, powerful, persuasive, and cohesive line of argumentation in the Paulines. See Betz, "Literary Composition", 354.

homily is "a direct response to a specific historical-political situation and problem."¹²⁹

B. OUTLINE OF THE BODY OF THE WORK

In general this study will follow the order and steps involved in rhetorical analysis as proposed by Kennedy.¹³⁰ Thus in Chapter one Colossians as a rhetorical unit is discussed; questions of unity, sources, and redaction are also treated. Chapter two covers the letter's rhetorical situation, including the exigence which led to its creation, the question of authorship, the audience the author sought to influence, the rhetorical constraints involved, and the rhetorical problems faced by the author. In Chapter three the epistle's *quaestiones*, *stasis*, and *genus* are identified. Chapter four consists in the rhetorical analysis proper. The discourse is divided into its rhetorical parts which are then separately examined with regard to their invention, arrangement, and style. Lastly the rhetorical skill and effectiveness of the document is evaluated in chapter five and the conclusions and implications of the study are considered.

¹²⁹Schüssler Fiorenza, E. "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," NTS 33 (1987), 387 (subsequently, Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation"); furthermore: "The situation controls the rhetorical response in the same sense that the question controls the answer. Rhetorical criticism focuses on the persuasive power and literary strategies of a text which has a communicative function in a concrete historical situation. Rhetorical discourse is generated by a specific condition or situation inviting a response."

¹³⁰Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33-38.

C. SUMMARY

A rhetorical investigation of Colossians is now ready to begin. We have defined rhetorical criticism, discussed its origins and traced its development. A methodology has been adopted which relies heavily upon that proposed by Kennedy and classical rhetoric itself has been discussed: including its origins and its most important surviving texts useful for such a study, as well as its applicability to epistles. And finally objectives for the study have been proposed and an outline of the work provided.

CHAPTER ONE: THE RHETORICAL UNIT

I.A. COLOSSIANS AS A RHETORICAL UNIT

The first step in Kennedy's method of rhetorical analysis is to define the boundaries of the unit of discourse to be studied.¹ A unit of discourse may be considered as a rhetorical unit if it has an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion, since these are the parts necessary for any complete development of a theme.² The introductory and concluding parts may be merely cursory, but apart from them the body is at risk of becoming incomprehensible to the audience.

A rhetorical unit may consist of an entire discourse or of a smaller portion of a whole discourse.³ In the case of the latter, its distinctiveness as a unit is determined by the presence of its introductory and concluding parts, and its rhetorical interpretation is considered in view of the rhetoric of the entire work.

As an epistle, Colossians forms a clearly defined unit.⁴ It possesses the obvious introduction (1:1-2) and conclusion (4:7-18) of an epistle which encapsulates an arguably cohesive body (1:3-4:6). Thus in its present state it exists as a rhetorical whole and will be dealt with in this study as such. However, the epistle's

¹Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33. This corresponds to Muilenburg's first step.

²Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33f. He compares the rhetorical unit to the pericope of form criticism.

³For example, Paul's speech before Felix recorded in Acts 24 is a complete rhetorical unit contained within the larger rhetorical unit of the entire book of Acts.

⁴"In the case of the short epistles of the New Testament it is possible to begin with the whole letter as a unit" (Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33).

compositional integrity has been questioned by some scholars. For this reason, the various arguments and evidence concerning the epistle's unity will be set out as briefly as possible in the following paragraphs in order to establish whether reasonable grounds exist for re-assembling the letter in some other form, for reconstructing a variant text of Colossians as our rhetorical unit. This will be an attempt to establish a plausible textual foundation upon which to build the rhetorical analysis. It should also be noted that in the process of analysis the preliminary assumption of the letter's unity may either be confirmed or found to be in need of modification.

I.B. CONCERNING THE COMPOSITIONAL INTEGRITY OF COLOSSIANS

Generally speaking, there are three scholarly opinions among those who question the compositional integrity of Colossians: some have suggested that an original Pauline epistle lies at the core of Colossians and that this original can be reassembled through painstaking examination of the text; others, while acknowledging a Pauline core, despair of ever being able to reconstruct it as they consider it so intertwined with the work of the later editor(s); still others believe that the letter is the original work of Paul or a "Pauline theologian", but that the author has incorporated certain traditional materials into the text which can now be isolated.

In the first group is H.J. Holtzmann who, in 1872, was the first scholar to propose that an original, reconstructible Pauline letter lay behind what he claimed

to be the reworked text of Colossians.⁵ He believed that a redactor had revised and expanded an authentic epistle which consisted originally of Col. 1:9b-12,14-24,26-28; 2:2b-3,7a,9-11,15,17-19,22-23; 3:1-2,4-11,14-16,18-25; 4:1,9,15-17.⁶ H. von Soden suggested that the epistle was authentic except for 1:15-20 and 2:10,15, and 18 which he considered to be interpolations.⁷ In 1905 W. Soltan proposed that the core of an original letter included 1:1-13; 2:1-3:4; and 4:10-18.⁸ P.N. Harrison, writing in 1950, suggested that Paul wrote a version of Colossians while imprisoned in Ephesus. This epistle, he claimed, was later revised by the author of Ephesians who added the expansions of 1:15-20, and 2:4,8-23 in order to give more authority to his own work.⁹ In the same year, C. Masson proposed that Colossians consisted of an original, authentically Pauline letter, surviving in 1:1-4,7-8; 2:6,8-9,11a,12a,16,20-21; 3:3-4,12-13a,18-22a,25; 4:1-3b,5-8a,9-12a,14,(possibly 15), and 17-18. Masson theorized that this original was used by the author of Ephesians to

⁵Holtzmann, H.J. *Kritik der Epheser- und Kolosserbriefe* (Leipzig, 1872), 46-83, 303-314; subsequently Holtzmann, *Kritik*. His theory about the composition of Colossians was part of a complex scheme which attempted to explain the origin of the similarities between Col. and Eph.

⁶He further believed that the redactor of Col. also revised the originally pauline Philemon, adding verses 4-6.

⁷von Soden, H. *Die Briefe an die Kolosser, Epheser, Philemon, die Pastoralbriefe* (Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr, 1981), 15; and "Der Kolosserbrief," *JPTH* 11 (1885), 320-68, 497-542 and 672-702; subsequently von Soden, *Kolosser*.

⁸Soltan, W. "Die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Kolosserbriefes" *TSK* 78 (1905), 521-562 (esp. 523-24 and 556-59); subsequently Soltan, "Gestalt".

⁹Harrison, P.N. "Onesimus and Philemon," *ATR* 32 (1950) 271-4, 281-82, and 292-93; subsequently Harrison, "Onesimus".

create the canonical text of Colossians.¹⁰

As a brief glance shows, the reconstructions of these scholars are only rarely in agreement with one another, more often they are in complete opposition to one another; almost no unanimity exists as to which portions of the letter are original and which are the work of a redactor. It would be hard to say, in examining the combined results of their proposals, that any one passage deserves more careful scrutiny than any other as a result of its authenticity being more consistently questioned. This no doubt has led to the cynicism of the second group of scholars¹¹ who believe that the present epistle is indeed based upon an original, authentically Pauline letter which, however, has been so thoroughly redacted that it cannot possibly be reconstructed from the letter we now possess. All reconstructions are doomed to failure because they are thoroughly arbitrary and contradict the unified structure and cohesive flow of the epistle.

The third viewpoint—that the author of Colossians (whether Paul or someone writing in his name) employed pre-existent "traditional" materials at certain points in the letter—has the largest number of adherents.¹² G. Cannon¹³, drawing upon

¹⁰Masson, C. *L'Épître aux Colossiens* (CNT 10; Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1950); "...it is a revision and development of the primitive epistle of Paul to the Colossians by the author of Ephesians...", 86; cf. 159; subsequently Masson, *Colossiens*.

¹¹For example Bowen, C.R. "The Original Form of Paul's Letter to the Colossians", *JBL* 43 (1924), 200ff (subsequently Bowen, "Original Form"); and Pfeiderer, O. *Primitive Christianity*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Putnam, 1906), 269; subsequently Pfeiderer, *Primitive Christianity*.

¹²For example, Carrington, P. *The Primitive Christian Catechism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940); Deichgräber, R. *Gottes hymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit: Untersuchungen zu Form, Sprache und Stil der frühchristlichen Hymnen* (SUNT 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967), 143-68; Käsemann, E. "A Primitive Christian Baptismal Liturgy," in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W.J. Montague (London: SCM Press, 1964),

the combined research of these scholars, has proposed that Col. 1:12-23; 2:9-15; and 3:5-4:6 are "traditional" materials incorporated into the epistle by the author (whom, incidentally, he considers to be Saint Paul).

It may be concluded from this brief summary of scholarly hypotheses that each of the three groups does seem to agree that the letter as it now stands does form a comprehensible and logically progressive self-contained unit in and of itself regardless of whether or not the author incorporated traditional materials into his own work or reworked a pre-existent Pauline letter. There seems to be little basis for attempting to "reconstruct" an "original" Colossian epistle since there is no consensus as to what such a reconstruction would look like and little reason to contemplate the existence of such an original apart from the need to explain the similarities between Colossians and Ephesians. In other words, it is more sensible

149-168 (subsequently Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy"); Martin, R.P. "Reconciliation and Forgiveness in the Letter to the Colossians", in *Reconciliation and Hope*, Festschrift for L. Morris, ed. R.J. Banks, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 104-24; Munro, W. "Col iii. 18-iv. 1 and Eph v. 21-vi. 9: Evidences of a Late Literary Stratum?" *NTS* 18 (1972), 434-437; Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 250-254; Robinson, J.M. "A Formal Analysis of Col. 1:15-20" *JBL* 76 (1957), 270-287 (subsequently Robinson, "Formal Analysis"); Schille, G. *Frühchristliche Hymnen* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1962), 31-37; Schweizer, E. "The Church as the Missionary Body of Christ" *NTS* 8 (1961/62), 1-11; Vawter, B. "The Colossian Hymn and the Principle of Redaction" *CBQ* 33 (1971), 62-81; Wengst, K. *Christologische Formeln und Lieder des Urchristentums* (SNT 8d.7; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 1972), 186-94; Zeilinger, F. *Der Erstgeborene der Schöpfung: Untersuchungen, Formalstruktur und Theologie des Kolosserbriefes* (Vienna: Herder, 1974), 54.

Further references may be found in Lohse, E. *Colossians and Philemon*, trans. W.R. Poehlmann and R.J. Karris (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 41; Martin, R.P. *Colossians and Philemon* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1973), 61-64 (subsequently Martin, *Colossians*); and Gabathuler, H.-J. *Jesus Christus, Haupt der Kirche—Haupt der Welt: Der Christhymnus Colosser 1:15-20 in der theologischen Forschung der letzten 130 Jahre* (ATANT 45; Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1965).

¹³Cannon, G.E. *The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians. Their Significance for the Problem of Authenticity and Purpose* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 173; subsequently Cannon, *Traditional Materials*.

to proceed with the unified canonical text which we possess than to construct a new unit for which there exists little or no evidence.

Nonetheless, the verses indicated by numerous scholars as possible source materials and which are summarized in Cannon should be observed throughout the rhetorical analysis in order to discover if there exist any grounds from a rhetorical perspective for considering these passages as either traditional materials employed by the author or as interpolations into an authentic epistle made by a later redactor. Any conclusions concerning sources or interpolations in the case of Colossians, however, should derive from the rhetorical analysis rather than precede it. The determination of possible source materials, it should be remembered, is not essential for carrying out a rhetorical analysis. As Kennedy states:

"It is doubtless desirable to preserve an awareness of the possible sources of the text, but the determination of those sources is not a primary goal of the method and will not necessarily reveal much about the qualities of the finished product."¹⁴

A rhetorical analysis of Colossians may indeed shed light on such compositional and textual questions, though this would in a sense be an accidental consequence.

I.C. THE CONTRIBUTION OF RHETORICAL CRITICISM IN DETERMINING THE LITERARY INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF TEXTS.¹⁵

At this point it is perhaps worth mentioning how rhetorical criticism may assist historical criticism in uncovering answers to questions of textual authenticity

¹⁴Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33.

¹⁵For a more detailed treatment of this topic see Watson, *Jude*, 151-155.

and integrity. Traditional attempts at identifying and isolating interpolations or secondary materials within NT documents have been based upon either "external" textual evidence or "internal" stylistic and thematic evidence. In contrast, rhetorical criticism looks to the classical rhetorical theories ultimately based upon intention and conventions which were to guide a document's invention, arrangement, and style. By examining a text according to these rhetorical standards rhetorical analysis theoretically has the potential to bring to light possible incongruities in that text. And thus rhetorical criticism can serve as an additional check for source and redaction criticism.

With regard to the rhetorical invention, arrangement, and style of a text, the objectives of rhetorical analysis include the identification of its rhetorical questions, *stasis* and *genus*, the delineation of its arrangement (which includes the identification of its parts and how they function or fail to function together as well as the examination of the interrelationship of its proposition and argumentation), and the evaluation of its characteristics of style. Following a rhetorical analysis, any sections suspected of being non-original can be compared against the rhetoric of the entire document to see if that will offer any evidence for or against such suspicions.

To carry out such a comparison involves asking questions about the relationship of the suspect passage's rhetorical invention, arrangement, and style to that of the entire text. Certain rhetorical incongruities between the suspect passage and the text as a whole act as signs or indicators which can testify against the authenticity or originality of the passage.

Signs arising from rhetorical invention which may indicate non-originality include the non-correspondence of the suspect passage to the exigence which gave rise to the discourse and is known from the rest of the discourse, or the non-correspondence of the *genus* of the suspect passage to that of its context or to that of the whole document and which cannot be explained as an integral, functional support for carrying out the purpose of the main genre. Other such signs may be the non-correspondence of the passage to the document's main *quaestiones* and *stasis* or, more tellingly, the apparent assumption by the suspect passage of completely different *quaestiones* or *stases* from those of the entire work. Another indicator is the non-correspondence of topics, propositions, or proofs to those set forth, developed, or summarized elsewhere in the progressive argumentation of the discourse (or at least similar or supportive to it). Also, since each *genus* is traditionally best served by a certain style of argumentation (e.g. deliberative prefers example and comparison), unexpected differences in argumentation may point to secondary material, especially if such unexpected argumentation does not seem to work toward the proof central to the exigence or is not the result of its context being of another *genus* which works to that end.

Signs of possible source materials or interpolations arising from rhetorical arrangement include any irregular ordering of the parts of the oration. This occurs when the suspect passage appears as an intrusion, or when its content fails to conform to what is rhetorically prescribed for that part of the discourse in which it appears (e.g. when the suspect passage narrates events yet appears within the

argumentatio, rather than the *narratio*), or when it appears as a violation of standard order (e.g. if the *propositio* precedes the *exordium*). If a suspect passage can be removed without impairing the arrangement of the entire work or distorting the proportion of the rhetorical parts to one another (e.g. causing the *exordium* to be larger than the *argumentatio*), then it may well be a later addition. But if the removal of the same unit distorts or impairs the arrangement, then it is almost certainly original. Originality will be hard to deny to any suspect passage which constitutes a complete or apparently integral portion of a rhetorical part of a discourse. Also, the content and purpose of the passage in question should correspond to that of the rhetorical part in which it occurs or in a perspicuous manner relate to the exigence of the document and the progression of the discourse's argumentative development. For example, if a suspect passage occurring in the *exordium* does not aim at gaining the attention, good-will, or receptivity of the audience, it may well be non-original. However, it should be noted that this is more difficult to prove for a passage occurring in a *digressio*, since as a rhetorical part the *digressio* is much more free in its content and construction than the other parts of a speech. But of course even digressions should work toward accomplishing the goals of the oration as a whole.

Signs of style which may indicate secondary materials include shifts in style which cannot be adequately justified in view of the exigence and needs of the context or the document as a whole. Such shifts may occur among the three basic styles of plain, middle, and grand or among the three *genera* of epideictic,

deliberative, and judicial or among the various parts of the discourse. The three styles, the three *genera*, and the various parts all have prescribed stylistic tendencies (for example, epideictic may use all means of ornamentation and by nature tends towards grandeur of style, whereas judicial should be more subdued and rational in its appeal). Therefore, if a suspect passage violates the stylistic tendencies of its context or of the document as a whole, this violation may indicate the non-originality of the passage. Yet as a caution it should be remembered that a single cohesive oration, while maintaining an overall style or genre, may employ materials from other genres or in other styles to accomplish its overall purpose.

The weight given to theories of redaction and source must depend upon the document in question. If a text clearly forms a functioning, cohesive rhetorical unit in its extant form, if it corresponds to the conventions of invention and arrangement and possesses a uniformity of style, then it may be concluded that no rhetorical grounds exist for postulation of reliance upon unrefined source materials or additions to an original document. At most all that can be claimed is that a redaction of an original document has been so masterful and complete that a rhetorically harmonious *opus* has emerged. In such a case, extensive revision and editing must be assumed to have taken place in the text to account for the functional interdependence of its rhetorical elements, since certain parts of any oration tend to be very dependent upon the situation at hand and so do not offer a good opportunity to employ borrowed material. Such are the *exordium*, *narratio*, and *peroratio*. It is more likely that borrowed material would appear in the *argumentatio*, since standardized proofs



can suit numerous cases, or in a *digressio* where freedom would permit such borrowing. It is also unlikely that borrowed material would overlap two different rhetorical parts because of their different functions and because of the unique character which the exigence and *stasis* of a discourse give to its parts as they relate to one another to accomplish the end of that discourse. So unless we have available the supposed source of any suspected secondary material or a pre-redacted version of the text, in rhetorical criticism the judgement that a passage is non-original must rest upon observable deviations of that passage from the conventions governing the invention, arrangement, and style of the text as a whole.

Yet in spite of the presence or absence of rhetorical indicators there must always remain an element of doubt as to the originality of suspected passages on account of the unknown element of the author or redactor and the subjective judgement of the evaluator. It is possible for a skilled redactor to so blend an original work with his additions that the two fit together as a cohesive and coherent rhetorical work. On the other hand, an untrained or willful author can so disregard rhetorical convention (or modern Western sensitivities of taste) as to produce a work which appears at points disjointed, rough, and non-original. Ironically, the more creative or unorthodox an author is, the greater is the potential for passages which can appear as inauthentic!

All indications of suspect verses should be considered together and in light of the entire document while keeping in mind the above mentioned cautions, since rhetorical theory has always allowed a certain amount of fluidity in the construction

of a speech conditioned by the situation confronting the writer and his own judgement as to what will be the most effective approach.

All questions of originality and authenticity in Colossians will be taken up again in the concluding chapter after a full rhetorical analysis has been performed so that its results may be compared with the various theories of the document's redaction and reliance upon traditional materials.

I.D. ARRANGEMENT (*DISPOSITIO*)

...every discourse must be organized, like a living being, with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to be headless or footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and to the whole.¹⁶

I.D.1. The Classical Rhetorical Theory of Arrangement

Having established the entire epistle as the rhetorical unit, we will now briefly discuss the letter's rhetorical arrangement of parts in order to determine a working outline.¹⁷ Implications of the epistle's arrangement will for the most part

¹⁶*Phdr* 264,c: ...πάντα λόγον ὥσπερ ζῶον συνεστάναι σῶμά τι ἔχοντα αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ, ὥστε μήτε ἀκέφαλον εἶναι μήτε ἄπουν, ἀλλὰ μέσα τε ἔχειν καὶ ἄκρα, πρέποντ' ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ γεγραμμένα.

¹⁷Some scholars (for example, Reed, *Discourse Analysis*, 156ff) have criticized the usefulness and propriety of applying rhetorical theories of arrangement and genre to NT epistles. Such criticisms are certainly necessary in cases where non-universal rhetorical or epistolary designations are applied in universal fashion. A case in point is Jewett's attempt to identify Romans as an epideictic "ambassadorial" letter (Jewett, "Ambassadorial", 5-20; see also Malherbe, *Theorists*), a designation conceived by the ancient epistolary theorists especially for a specific form of governmental correspondence and intended as a model for professional letter writers. Such criticisms, however, do not apply to the proper and measured application of general or universal rhetorical theory to NT documents or even to the conscious comparison of NT writings with theories or documents known to be of a distinct nature.

Scholars such as Reed (*Discourse Analysis*, 168ff) or L.G. Bloomquist in his *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (JSNTS 78; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1993) who favor epistolary divisions over rhetorical divisions in reconstructing the structure of NT letters are open to criticism on several points. First, only the most basic structures of arrangement can be gleaned from

be reserved for Chapter Four.

All complex things have a natural and logical order, each according to its kind. This is true also for a speech if it is to be comprehensible and persuasive—if it is to be effective. There is a natural place to begin, a middle, and a conclusion of some sort. The arrangement (τάξις, οἰκονομία, *dispositio*, *ordo*, *collocatio*) of the various parts of the speech into the most effective order possible is the second of the five *officia* of the orator, following *inventio*. Invention and arrangement are actually inseparably interwoven with one another and in practice occur simultaneously. Arrangement is also closely connected to the third *officium*, style (*elocutio*), in that arrangement organizes the ideas discovered in invention into verbal form which is polished in detail according to the chosen style of the orator in *elocutio*.

In order to develop the speech's *dispositio* or even its *inventio*, *intellectio* is needed. Through *intellectio* the speaker determines 1) whether the *materia* is capable of maintaining a *stasis*, and if so 2) what the general *stasis* is, 3) what the *genus* of the speech is, and 4) how easy it is to defend the *causa*. *Intellectio* is essential in co-ordinating the *stasis* with the *genus causarum* and with the *argumenta*

comparative epistolography (such as 'opening', 'thanksgiving', 'body middle', 'closing'). Second, these divisions provide little or no hint of their own function or argumentative importance. And finally, although Paul's letters have no real parallels in the documentary, non-literary papyri, most epistolary comparisons depend upon these. This last point of course is similar to the charge often directed at rhetorical criticism that it relies for comparison upon manuals intended for Greco-Roman judicial oratory. Although the charge should not be allowed to disqualify either form of analysis, neither should it be overlooked. The first two charges are more serious when comparing the merits of epistolary and rhetorical *dispositio* and give the advantage to the rhetorical. Of the two, only rhetorical criticism can distinguish a structure of argumentation (and that in fine detail in comparison to epistolary analysis) and only rhetorical criticism possesses such an extensive corpus of ancient texts treating the theory and production of argumentation.

(*probationes, circumstantiae*)—the *divisio*. This demands the ability to divine the future development of the *materia* and of arguments and whether or not they can be maintained through the five stages of the *officia oratoris*.¹⁸

After the orator through *intellectio* has discovered the *stasis* of the topic to be covered as well as its *genus* and the proofs available to him in the situation at hand, he is ready to arrange his materials. Arrangement consists in ordering the ideas discovered in the invention "into an outline, paying attention to such things as the best sequence to use, or whether one should expand upon this or that point, or how best to develop a sub-theme".¹⁹ "...It is through the Arrangement that we set in order the topics we have invented so that there may be a definite place for each in the delivery..."²⁰ "Arrangement is the distribution of things and parts to the places which it is expedient that they should occupy"²¹ so as to be of the most use towards attaining the objective of the speech.

In seeking to determine the rhetorical parts of Colossians and understand the significance of their arrangement in the light of classical theory, the questions arise as to how many parts of a speech there are, what these parts are, whether these

¹⁸Lausberg, H. *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990), §§ 97, 139, and 255; subsequently Lausberg, *Handbuch*.

¹⁹Mack, *Rhetoric*, 32.

²⁰*AdHer* 3,9,16: ...*dispositio est per quam illa quae invenimus in ordinem redigimus ut certo quicquid loco pronuntietur...*

²¹*InstOr* 7,1,1: ...*dispositio utilis rerum ac partium in locos distributio. AdHer* 1,2,3: "Arrangement is the ordering and distribution of the matter, making clear the place to which each thing is to be assigned" (*Dispositio est ordo et distributio rerum, quae demonstrat quid quibus locis sit conlocandum*); cf. Cicero, *Or* 15,50.

parts are common to all speeches, and whether standard parts exist for all speeches.²²

From earliest times there was dispute over how many and which parts constitute the *partes orationis* and what their order in a speech should be. Aristotle ridiculed those who wished to add ever more specialized parts as essential for all speeches, particularly the attribution of judicial parts to deliberative or epideictic speeches.²³ He proposed that only two parts are essential to all speeches (the ἀναγκαῖα μέρη consisting of: the πρόθεσις, and the πίστις)²⁴, although they may have up to four parts (added may be τὰ πλεῖστα μέρη: the προοίμιον and the ἐπίλογος).²⁵ In contrast some authors list eight or more "essential" parts.²⁶

The προοίμιον (ἔφοδος, *exordium*) is the first of the *partes orationis*. It is basically an introduction. As such it may serve to introduce the speaker and his

²²On the significance of rhetorical disposition for establishing issues such as a discourse's rhetorical genre, see Aletti, J.-N. "La *dispositio* rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes. Propositions de méthode," *NTS* 38 (1992), 385-401.

²³*ArRhet* 3,13.

²⁴Aristotle (*ArRhet* 3,13) compared these two essential parts of an oration to his theory of scientific demonstration which consists of the two corresponding parts of problem (πρόβλημα) and demonstration (ἀπόδειξις).

²⁵*ArRhet* 3,13. Aristotle's four parts may be divided not only into 1) essential parts (πρόθεσις and πίστις) and 2) remedial parts (προοίμιον and ἐπίλογος), but also into 1) the part which is necessary for instructing the audience (πρόθεσις καὶ πίστις) and 2) the part which is necessary for moving the audience (προοίμιον καὶ ἐπίλογος). This second division is precisely the two-fold division proposed by Martianus Capella: 1) *pars qua docemus iudices* (=narratio et confirmatio) and 2) *pars qua movemus iudices* (=prooemium et epilogus) in "Martiani Minnei Felicis Capellae liber de arte rhetorica", 448ff in C. Halm, *Rhetores Latini minores* (Lipsiae, 1863); see Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 149.

²⁶For example Fortunatian mentions a rhetor whom he leaves unnamed who included at least 9 *partes* (*Fortun.Rhet.* 2,12 p.108,23ff): προέκθεσις, προπαρασκευή, διέξοδος, ἀνανέωσις, partitio, πρόθεσις, ὑπεξαίρεσις, πίστις, ἀνακεφαλαίωσις; Troilos lists 8 parts: προοίμιον, προκατασκευή, προκατάστασις, κατάστασις, ἀγῶνες, παρέκθεσις, παρέκβασις, and ἐπίλογος.

subject to his listeners, although its main function was universally acknowledged as threefold: to make the audience 1) well-disposed (εὐνοῦς, *benivolus*²⁷) towards the orator and his cause, 2) attentive (προσεκτικός, *adtentus*) to what he has to say, and 3) receptive (εὐμαθής, *docilis*) to his instruction. Cicero summed up its purposes well when he wrote, "An *exordium* is a passage which brings the mind of the auditor into a proper condition to receive the rest of the speech..."²⁸

There are two types of *exordia*: the direct opening (προοίμιον, *principium*), and the subtle approach (ἔφοδος, *insinuatō*).

The Direct Opening straightway prepares the hearer to attend to our speech. Its purpose is to enable us to have hearers who are attentive, receptive, and well-disposed.²⁹

But a *principium* cannot be used for every rhetorical discourse. On three occasions the more subtle approach is recommended:

...(1) when our cause is discreditable, that is, when the subject itself alienates the hearer from us; (2) when the hearer has apparently been won over by the previous speakers of the opposition; (3) or when the hearer has become wearied by listening to the previous speakers.³⁰

The objective of the *insinuatō* is the same as for the *principium*—to make the

²⁷The spelling *benivolus* (and its cognates) takes precedence in the classical rhetorical sources over the lexical form *benevolus* (and its cognates) and so will be preferred throughout this study.

²⁸*DeInv* 1,15,20: *Exordium est oratio animum auditoris idonee comparans ad reliquam dictionem...* Cf. *AdHer* 1,3,4: "The Introduction is the beginning of the discourse, and by it the hearer's mind is prepared for attention" (*Exordium est principium orationis, per quod animus auditoris constituitur ad audiendum*).

²⁹*AdHer* 1,4,6: *Principium est cum statim auditoris animum nobis idoneum reddimus ad audiendum. Id ita sumitur ut adtentos, ut dociles, ut benivolos auditores habere possimus.*

³⁰*AdHer* 1,6,9: *...aut cum turpem causam habemus, hoc est, cum ipsa res animum auditoris a nobis alienat; aut cum animus auditoris persuasus esse videtur ab iis qui ante contra dixerunt; aut cum defessus est eos audiendo qui ante dixerunt.*

audience attentive, receptive, and well-disposed—but it accomplishes these in roundabout ways, through dissimulation.

The *πρόθεσις* follows the *προοίμιον* as the next part of a speech. For Aristotle it consists simply of a brief proposition or statement (*πρόθεσις*, *propositio*, *declaratio*) of the subject of the discourse, though in most later rhetoricians the *διηγήσις* (*narratio*) became the second part of a speech. It consists in a narration of the events which have led up to the present situation and/or of the conditions existing in the present and/or of those anticipated in the future. Aristotle protested that such narration should not be considered as a true speech part since he considered it usually only necessary in judicial speeches; he further indicated that it truly functions as a sub-part since it can appear within any of the true parts.³¹ Yet the function of Aristotle's *πρόθεσις* was commonly maintained as a sub-part of the narration by other rhetoricians.³² Some rhetoricians also included at this point in the arrangement of a discourse the partition (*προκατασκευή*—a combination of the *προέκθεσις* and the *μερισμός*—*partitio*, *divisio*) and the digression (*digressio*). Quintilian and others did not consider these as actual parts in the structure of a discourse since they can appear at any point in an oration and act only as supports or ornaments to the part in which they occur.³³

³¹*ArRhet* 3,13,3.

³²See *InstOr* 4,2,1 and 4,4,1.

³³*InstOr* 3,9,1ff.

The *πίστις* (*argumentatio*),³⁴ which follows the *πρόθεσις* (or *narratio*), forms the third of the four Aristotelian *partes orationis*. It is without a doubt the most important part of a rhetorical discourse. The introduction and statement serve fully to prepare the audience for the *argumentatio* and the epilogue, in its final appeal to the audience, depends heavily upon that which was established by the *argumentatio*.

The entire hope of victory and the entire method of persuasion rest on proof and refutation, for when we have submitted our arguments and destroyed those of the opposition, we have, of course, completely fulfilled the speaker's function.³⁵

Other rhetors often divided the *argumentatio* into a positive proof, the confirmation (*κατασκευή*, *confirmatio*), and a negative proof, the refutation (*ἀνασκευή*, *refutatio*, *reprehensio*).³⁶ The entire goal of the *confirmatio* is the bolstering of one's own arguments with the strongest evidences available. Cicero defined the *confirmatio* as that "part of the oration which by marshalling arguments

³⁴In this study the less common title of *argumentatio* takes precedence over the more usual terms of proof or *probatio* since these latter terms can be confused with the *confirmatio* which constitutes only half of the function of this *pars orationis*, cf. Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 148-149.

³⁵*AdHer* 1,10,18: *Tota spes vincendi ratioque persuadendi posita est in confirmatione et in confutatione. Nam cum adiumenta nostra exposuerimus contrariaque dissolverimus, absolute nimirum munus oratorium confecerimus.*

³⁶Aristotle defends his combination of proof and refutation into *πίστις* with the statement "...for refutation of an opponent is part of the proofs..." (...τὰ γὰρ πρὸς τὸν ἀντίδικον τῶν πίστεων ἐστὶ...), *ArRhet* 3,13,4. In defense of Aristotle's classification of the *πίστις*, it must be said that refutation is not always necessary (in fact it is unusual in epideictic and deliberative) and when it does occur it is often interspersed and interwoven among the individual proofs (thus it often does not produce a distinct part to be distinguished from proof).

lends credit, authority, and support to our case".³⁷ He defined the *refutatio* as "that part of an oration in which arguments are used to impair, disprove, or weaken the confirmation or proof in our opponents' speech".³⁸ "Proof is the presentation of our arguments, together with their corroboration. Refutation is the destruction of our adversaries' arguments".³⁹

The ἐπίλογος (*conclusio, peroratio*) is Aristotle's final speech part. It can have several functions. As the conclusion of the whole speech it may include an *enumeratio* (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις), or brief summary of the major points discussed. It also is the point where the orator may appeal most strongly to the emotions of his audience (*pathos*). There is often an attempt to arouse in the audience a sense of anger or loathing against the opposing argument (*indignatio*) and additionally to arouse a sense of sympathy in favor of one's own argument (*conquestio*).⁴⁰

Aristotle taught that the epilogue should be used

...to dispose the hearer favorably towards oneself and unfavorably towards the adversary; to amplify and deprecate; to excite the emotions of the hearer; to recapitulate. For after you have proved that you are truthful and that the adversary is false, the natural order of things

³⁷DeInv 1,24,34: *Confirmatio est per quam argumentando nostrae causae fidem et auctoritatem et firmamentum adiungit oratio.*

³⁸DeInv 1,42,78: *Reprehensio est per quam argumentando adversariorum confirmatio diluitur aut infirmatur aut elevatur.*

³⁹AdHer 1,3,4: *Confirmatio est nostrorum argumentorum expositio cum adseveratione. Confutatio est contrariorum locorum dissolutio.*

⁴⁰DeInv 1,53,100; 1,55,106.

is to praise ourselves, blame him, and put the finishing touches.⁴¹

The following is a visual representation of Aristotle's arrangement of parts with their English and Latin equivalents:

Προοίμιον (introduction/*exordium*)--optional

Πρόθεσις (proposition/*propositio*)--essential

Πίστις (argument/*argumentatio*)--essential

Ἐπίλογος (conclusion/*peroratio*)--optional

As noted above, Aristotle did recognize that many sub-parts may also be employed in an oration. The *πρόθεσις* may include a narration of the events leading up to the case (*διήγησις/narratio*); the *πίστις* may be subdivided into a positive statement of one's own arguments (*κατασκευή/confirmatio*) and an attempt to refute the opponent's arguments (*ἀνασκευή/refutatio*); digressions may be added at any point in the discourse (*παρέκβασις/digressio*). All of these additional parts, however, were to be viewed as subordinate to and assisting in accomplishing the function of the four core parts.

While most ancient rhetorical manuals contain Aristotle's four core parts (often under different names), most, as seen above, expanded upon the Aristotelian model.⁴² The following chart compares Aristotle's parts with those listed by several other classical rhetors:

⁴¹*ArRhet* 3,19,1: ...ἐκ τε τοῦ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν κατασκευάσαι εἶ τοῦ ἀκροατῆν καὶ τὸν ἐναντίον φαύλως, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνέξῃσαι καὶ ταπεινῶσαι, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ εἰς τὰ πάθη τὸν ἀκροατῆν καταστήσαι, καὶ ἐξ ἀναμνήσεως. πέφυκε γὰρ μετὰ τὸ ἀποδείξει αὐτὸν μὲν ἀληθῆ τὸν δὲ ἐναντίον ψευδῆ, οὕτω τὸ ἐπαινεῖν καὶ ψέγειν καὶ ἐπιχαλκεύειν.

⁴²Additions to the four Aristotelian parts tend to function as special augments or subdivisions of judicial discourses; cf. *AdHer* 1,5; *DeInv* 1,14-19.

<i>ArRhet</i>	<i>AdAlex</i> ⁴³	<i>InstOr</i>	<i>Alii</i>	<i>DeInv/AdHer</i>
Προοίμιον	προοίμιον ⁴⁴	<i>exordium</i>	<i>exordium</i>	<i>exordium</i>
Πρόθεσις	-----	<i>narratio</i> ⁴⁵ (=διήγησις) [<i>partitio</i>] [<i>digressio</i>]	<i>narratio</i> <i>propositio</i> [<i>partitio</i>] [(or <i>divisio</i>)]	<i>narratio</i>
Πίστις	βεβαίωσις	<i>probatio</i>	<i>probatio</i>	<i>confirmatio</i>
	προκατάληψις	<i>refutatio</i>	<i>refutatio</i>	<i>reprehensio</i> (or <i>confutatio</i>)
Ἐπίλογος	ἀναλογιστέον ἐν κεφαλαίῳ	<i>peroratio</i> (incl. <i>enumeratio</i>)	<i>peroratio</i>	<i>conclusio</i>

By the beginning of the first century B.C. rhetorical arrangement had become refined into two types: natural arrangement (τάξις, *ordo naturalis*, *ex institutione artis*) and artistic arrangement (οἰκονομία, *ordo artificiosus*, *ad casum temporis*).⁴⁶ Which was the natural order, however, and which was the artificial

⁴³The *partes orationis* proposed by the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* are somewhat difficult to identify clearly because the author divides the rhetorical *genera* differently than Aristotle and describes each separately, proposing different parts for each *genus*. Additionally, some of those elements which he describes as parts would be considered as rhetorical figures or devices by other rhetors.

⁴⁴This includes a statement of the case (πρόθεσις) and so is the equivalent of a combination of προοίμιον + πρόθεσις (that is, *exordium* + *propositio* or *exordium* + *narratio*).

⁴⁵Aristotle's πρόθεσις is in essence the proposition of the subject of the entire discourse, that is, of its στάσις (see *ArRhet* 3,13,1). For πρόθεσις Quintilian employs the word *narratio* rather than *propositio* because he wishes to reserve the latter for the proposition of any proof (such as occur in the *probatio*), not just of the principal argument (see *InstOr* 4,2,1 and 4,4,1).

⁴⁶Martin, J. *Antike Rhetorik: Technik und Methode* (HAW II,3; Munich: C.H. Beck, 1974), 217; subsequently Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*.

order could change depending on the viewpoint of the orator. In general, natural order is that prescribed by the rhetorical manuals and runs as follows: *exordium*, *narratio*, *argumentatio*, and *peroratio*.⁴⁷ Artificial order consists in any deliberate ("artistic") deviation from the *ordo naturalis*. The *ordo artificiosus* is to derive from the judgement and discretion of the orator as to the arrangement which will best suit the circumstances of the case at hand. Unlike 'natural' arrangement which simply follows the patterns prescribed by the rhetorical manuals, artistic arrangement depends upon the insight, creativity, and intuition of the orator to step beyond those guidelines to produce a work more applicable to the situation confronting him.⁴⁸ *Ordo artificialis* is to be preferred to the *ordo naturalis* only when it is more advantageous in attaining the objectives of the speech (as, for example, when the *causa* has an unfavorable degree of defensibility). Thus functionality was to be the key and deciding factor in arrangement. Omission of any of the "natural" parts is classified as *ordo artificialis*.⁴⁹

I.D.2. The Rhetorical Arrangement of Colossians

So in approaching Colossians through classical rhetorical theory we should

⁴⁷Arrangement may vary depending upon rhetorical genre: for example, an epideictic discourse may follow a chronological order while a deliberative one may dispose of the *exordium* when the audience is already prepared to receive the speech, and so on (see *PartOr* 4,12-15; *ArRhet* 3,13).

⁴⁸Fortunatian (Fortun.Rhet. 3,1,p.120,22ff; see Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 218) lists 8 types of *ordo artificialis*: 1 *ordo per tempora*, 2 *ordo per incrementa*, 3 *ordo per status*, 4 *ordo per scriptorum partes atque verba*, 5 *ordo per confirmationis atque reprehensionis discrimen*, 6 *ordo per generales ac speciales quaestiones*, 7 *ordo per principales*, and 8 *ordo per incidentes*.

⁴⁹ Lausberg, *Handbuch*, § 452.

expect to find at the very least the two essential parts of proposition (or some similar statement of purpose) and proof. We should also be attentive to some sort of introduction and/or conclusion. Beyond these four common parts it is certainly possible that the epistle contains various other "superfluous" parts or sub-parts (such as the digression). Once the parts have been identified, their order should be examined to see whether it is "natural" or "artificial"; and should it prove to be artificial, reasons for this should be proposed. Before carrying this out, however, it will be of benefit and interest to survey the divisions and outlines attributed to Colossians by several commentators, with greater detail given to those with rhetorical interests.

I.D.2.a. Commentators' Non-Rhetorical Outlines of Colossians

There is wide disagreement among commentators with regard to the precise structure of Colossians. Several commentators do see a general division of the epistle into a didactic section which comprises chapters one and two and an exhortatory section covering chapters three and four.⁵⁰ Another variant of this common division is into three parts with, roughly speaking, chapter one as didactic, chapter two as a polemic against the heresy, and chapters three and four again as exhortatory.⁵¹ A further refinement of this traditional division is the four part division with 1:3-23 consisting of thanksgiving and reflection, 1:24-2:5 dealing with

⁵⁰E.g. Lohse, Schweizer, Hendriksen, Wright, Conzelmann.

⁵¹E.g. Gnika, Lähnemann, Zeilinger, Lightfoot, and Bruce.

Paul's apostolic ministry, 2:6-23 composed of argumentation against the heretics, and 3:1-4:6 yet again functioning as exhortation.⁵²

Breaking with these traditional models are the epistolary model proposed by Cannon, the structural model of Lamarche, and the rhetorical models of Melancthon, Hatfield, and Aletti.

Cannon's proposed division is based upon White's research into the structure of ancient epistles⁵³ and runs as follows:

Thanksgiving (1:3-23):

- A. thanksgiving (1:3-8)
- B. intercession (1:9-11)
- C. closing (1:12-23)

Body of the letter (1:24-4:9):

- A. opening (1:24-2:5)
- B. center (2:6-4:1)
- C. closing (4:2-9)

End of the letter (4:10-18):

- A. greetings (4:10-17)
- B. signature (4:18a)
- C. benediction (4:18b)

Lamarche's division of Colossians appeared in an article from 1975 which he wrote in the hope of remedying his dissatisfaction with the traditional divisions and what he saw as their violence to the flow of the text.⁵⁴ His fresh approach, based upon the linguistic structure of the text with its numerous chiasms and

⁵²E.g. Dibelius and Pokorny (whose four main divisions follow Dibelius exactly).

⁵³White, J.L. *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in the Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle* (SBLDS 2; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972), and "Introductory Formula in the Body of the Pauline Letter," *JBL* 90 (1971), 91-97; subsequently White, "Introductory Formula".

⁵⁴Lamarche, P. "Structure de l'épître aux Colossiens," *Bib* 56 (1975), 453-463; subsequently Lamarche, "Structure".

antithetical parallelisms, is reproduced here:

- I. Introduction (1:1-20)
 - A. Initial greeting (1:1-2)
 - B. Announcement of themes (1:3-4):
 - 1. thanksgiving (1:3a)
 - 2. prayer (1:3b)
 - 3. news received by Paul (1:4)
 - C. Development of themes (in reverse order) (1:4-20):
 - 3. news received (1:4-8)
 - 2. prayer (1:9-11)
 - 1. thanksgiving (1:12-20)
- II. Foundation of the letter (1:21-2:15)
 - A. Announcement of themes (antithetical parallelisms) (1:21-23)
 - 1. transformation in Christ (1:21-22)
 - 2. warning (1:23ab)
 - 3. proclamation of the Gospel (1:23bcd)
 - B. Development of themes (in reverse order) (1:24-2:15):
 - 3. proclamation (1:24-2:3); concentric structure:
 - mystery
 - addressees
 - struggle
 - addressees
 - mystery
 - 2. warning (2:4-8); antithetical parallelism (negative/positive/positive/negative)
 - 1. transformation in Christ (2:9-15); *aba* chiastic structure and antithetical parallelism in vs. 9-10
 - a. salvation in Christ (2:11-12)
 - b. transformation (2:13)
 - a. salvation in Christ (2:14-15)
- III. Application (2:16-4:1)
 - A. Practices (2:16-3:2)
 - B. Morality in general (3:3-17)
 - C. Social position (3:18-4:1)
- IV. Closing (4:2-18)

I.D.2.b. Commentators' Rhetorical Outlines of Colossians

Melanchthon, Hatfield, and Aletti have all produced differing outlines of

Colossians from a rhetorical standpoint. Melanchthon's outline runs as follows:⁵⁵

Epigrapha or *inscriptio* (1:1-2)

I. *Exordium* (1:3-11)

A. *locus communis* of thanksgiving (1:3-8)

B. *locus communis* of prayer (1:9-11)

II. *Narratio* (1:12-2:15);

with an insertion on the person of Christ (1:15-22)

III. *Epilogus* or *conclusio* (2:16-19)

IV. Additions to the *conclusio* (2:20-23)

V. Moral precepts (3:1-end)

Of note in this outline is the lack of Aristotle's two essential elements, the proposition and the proof, both of which were also acknowledged by Melanchthon as common parts. Parker believes that Melanchthon probably saw a *propositio* within the *narratio*,⁵⁶ although this seems unlikely for two reasons: first, Melanchthon nowhere in his commentary indicates such a *propositio* (unlike, for example, in his commentary on Romans where he identifies 3:21f as the principal *propositio*), and second, a *propositio* would be paradoxical without an accompanying proof since its very purpose is to set forth the main topic of the proof. Also to be noted is that the *epilogus* is not a true *peroratio* since it does not contain what Melanchthon considered to be the basic elements of a peroration: the repetition of the *propositio* and of the strongest arguments of the case and the expression of emotion. The tacking on of moral instruction after the conclusion presages the divisions of many modern commentators into doctrinal instruction in chapters one and two and moral exhortation in chapters three and four.

⁵⁵Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 21.

⁵⁶Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 21.

Melanchthon stressed the use of "common places". For him they seem to have been key doctrinal points capable of elaboration. "*Loci communes* are employed both for demonstrating something and for amplifying...by *loci communes* I mean, not only virtues and vices, but also the principal heads in every kind of doctrine."⁵⁷ "The *narratio*," unrevealingly, "is a setting forth of what is being said"⁵⁸ and in Colossians due to the absence of an *argumentatio* seems to take precedence over the other parts of the epistle.

Hatfield's outline of the epistle's "macrolevel structures" runs as follows:⁵⁹

- I. *Exordium* (1:1-14)
 - A. greetings (1:1-2)
 - B. prayer of thanksgiving (1:3-8)
 - C. prayer of petition (1:9-14)
- II. *Probatio* (1:15-4:6)
 - A. theological instruction (1:15-2:23)
 - 1. pre-eminence of Christ (1:15-23)
 - 2. Paul's personal ministry (1:24-2:7)
 - 3. the dangers of heresy (2:8-23)
 - B. practical instruction (3:1-4:6)
 - 1. seek the things above (3:1-4)
 - 2. put off the vices of sin (3:5-11)
 - 3. put on the virtues of grace (3:12-17)
 - 4. household rules (3:18-4:1)
 - 5. prayer and behavior (4:2-6)
- III. *Conclusio*: final greetings (4:7-18)

In effect, Hatfield retains the two-part division of chapters one and two as doctrinal and chapters three and four as hortatory. In contradiction of Aristotle, like

⁵⁷Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 20.

⁵⁸Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 20. One would expect rather, "the setting forth of what is about to be said [in the proof]," somewhat along the lines of a proposition, but in the present case this becomes nonsensical as no proof is forthcoming.

⁵⁹Hatfield, "Colossians", 182-183.

Melanchthon, he identifies no proposition, but unlike Melanchthon he does include a proof of some length, which is quite in line with Aristotelian theory.

Aletti's rhetorical outline differs somewhat and seems the most consistent with Aristotelian theory:⁶⁰

Epistolary framework: initial salutation (1:1-2)

Rhetorical structure:

- I. *Exordium* with hymnic developments (1:3-23)
 - partitio* or declaration of themes to be treated (1:21-23)
 - c. Christ's work for the sanctity of believers (1:21-22)
 - b. faithfulness to the Gospel received (1:23a)
 - a. and proclaimed by Paul (1:23b)
- II. *Probatio*, which develops these themes in reverse order (1:24-4:1)
 - A. Paul's struggle to proclaim the Gospel; composed chiastically (1:24-2:5)
 - B. faithfulness to the Gospel received (2:6-23)
 - a. exhortations relating to religious practices (2:6-8)
 - b. christological reasons: Christ and the faithful with him (2:9-15)
 - a'. consequences: resumption of exhortations (2:16-19)
 - C. the sanctity of believers (3:1-4:1)
 - a. principles (3:1-4)
 - b. the christian's state and ethical/ecclesiastical behavior (3:5-17)
 - c. application to familial or domestic life (3:18-4:1)
- III. Final exhortations functioning as a *peroratio* (4:2-6)

Resumption of epistolary framework: greetings and signature (4:7-18)

Aletti alone of rhetorically interested commentators identifies the two "essential" Aristotelian parts, though the task of the proposition is fulfilled by a *partitio*⁶¹ which, strangely, he considers to be a part of the *exordium* rather than forming its own independent part or appearing at the end of a *narratio* as would be

⁶⁰Aletti, *Colossiens*, 39.

⁶¹Aletti defines the *partitio* as follows: "Annonce, en quelques lignes, des thèmes ou des parties de la *probatio*. La *partitio* n'est pas toujours une *propositio*, car elle n'indique pas nécessairement la position de l'auteur sur la question qu'il va traiter," *Colossiens*, 288.

expected.⁶² His placing of the Christ Hymn within the *exordium* is also questionable as a possible statement of purpose (*propositio*) appears to precede it in 1:9-12.

An examination of these rhetorical outlines shows that it is possible to construct an outline of the epistle which omits both of Aristotle's necessary parts (proposition and argumentation)! Hatfield jumps immediately from *exordium* to *probatio*, thus indicating no statement of what is to be proved. Melancthon surprisingly introduces an epilogue immediately after the *narratio*. The existence in Colossians of Aristotle's two additional parts (exordium and conclusion) may likewise be questioned. A cursory glance at the rhetorical outlines above indicates complete disagreement as to what constitutes the peroration. And it is certainly difficult to find in the epistle any of the elements of Aristotle's epilogue: amplification, arousal of emotion, or a recapitulation of proofs. There is also disagreement over the *exordium*, though to a lesser degree, and although Aristotle declared that an introduction could consist of anything whatsoever,⁶³ it is also possible to interpret 1:3-23 as something other than an *exordium*, for instance as a *narratio* of events leading up to the current situation.

Thus theoretically it could be argued that Colossians possesses none of Aristotle's four parts! Such a conclusion would imply that the epistle is a

⁶²In defense of Aletti it should be noted that Aristotle did consider as a function of the *προοίμιον* its clarification of the orator's goal (*ArRhet* 3,14,6), although this seems to conflict with his statement (*ArRhet* 3,13) that this is the main duty of the *πρόθεσις*.

⁶³*ArRhet* 3,14,1.

construction of "superfluous" parts, or perhaps a jumble of traditional material compiled by a redactor, or that the letter lacks a *stasis* or cohesive argumentation. If the expected Aristotelian parts are, in fact, absent or at least not obvious, the rhetorical analyst is required either to force the epistle into the classical mold or to attempt to identify the "superfluous" rhetorical parts of which it is constructed while apparently denying that the epistle has a unified theme or progressive, developing argumentation with the goal of altering a real life situation.

The identification of parts is, of course, always a subjective business. As the preceding outlines suggest, it does appear that Colossians can be divided variously, with portions being identified differently depending upon which element is stressed. The blending and overlapping of rhetorical parts may also be present in the epistle and so lead to diverse outlines. Difficulties in precisely identifying the rhetorical parts of Colossians may be due to ambiguities and imprecisions in the classical descriptions themselves, or the epistle may tend to defy classical theory or at least be too obscure to provide clear rhetorical parts. A commentator's acquaintance with rhetorical theory will of course also influence the results obtained.

But the text of Colossians is almost certainly in better rhetorical shape than the preceding paragraphs might seem to imply. For most commentators would probably agree that the epistle does have a progressively developing line of argumentation and the letter itself at least implies that it was written in a real situation in response to a real need.

I.D.2.c. A New Rhetorical Outline of Colossians

In constructing a new rhetorical outline of Colossians it is sensible to begin with the most clearly distinguishable parts, which in this case are also the least visibly rhetorical: the epistolary prescript (1:1-2) and postscript (4:7-18), both of which may also have rhetorical functions. The prescript and postscript can themselves be further subdivided into epistolary parts: a superscription, adscription, and salutation for the prescript and a recommendation, salutation, signature, and benediction for the postscript. Further introductory material follows the prescript in 1:3-8, so fulfilling the task of the *προοίμιον* although it contains a strong narrational flavor. This introductory portion gives way to a statement of purpose, or *πρόθεσις*, introduced by *διὰ τοῦτο* in 1:9-12. The proposition is expressed by the infinitive phrase *περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου* in 1:10. This concept is elaborated in the following verses by the three participial phrases 1) *ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ*, 2) *ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι...εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν*, 3) *μετὰ χαρᾶς εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ*. These three themes are next developed in reverse order in elaborated arguments in the *πίστις* which runs from 1:12-4:6. The first elaborated argument on thankfulness takes the form of an encomium in 1:12-23. The second, on perseverance, relies upon the argumentative device of the example and runs from 1:23-2:5. The third elaborated argument, on knowledge and conduct, is the longest, from 2:6-4:6. It consists of a refutation and a confirmation and relies upon the device of comparison. The letter ends with an epistolary postscript as

mentioned above.

In accordance with this hypothesis the epistle may be outlined as follows:

- I. 1:1-2 epistolary prescript
 - A. 1:1 *superscriptio*
 - B. 1:2a *adscriptio*
 - C. 1:2b *salutatio*
 - (1:3 transitional clause)
- II. 1:3-8 *προοίμιον* (*exordium/principium*; with qualities of *διήγησις/narratio*)
 - A. (1:3-8 *encomium* for the Colossians)-epideictic
 - B. 1:5-6 *encomium* for Gospel
 - C. 1:7-8 *encomium* for Epaphras
 - (1:9a transitional clause)
- III. 1:9-12a *πρόθεσις* (*propositio/declaratio*); chiastic
 - A. 1:9b-10a *propositio*
 - B. 1:10b-12a *partitio*
 - 1. 1:10b bearing fruit and growing in knowledge
 - 2. 1:11 persevering
 - 3. 1:12 giving thanks to the Father
 - (1:12a transitional clause)
- IV. 1:12b-4:6 *πίστις* (*argumentatio*)
 - C. 1:12b-23a elaborated argument;
 - thankfulness: *encomium* to the Father (*ἐγκώμιον/demonstratio*)
 - 1. the Father's action in redemption
 - 2. the Father praised through his son: *encomium* for the Son
 - 3. the Father's action in redemption
 - (1:21-23a transitional clause)
 - B. 1:23-2:5 elaborated argument;
 - perseverance: Paul, example of joyful endurance
 - (*παράδειγμα/exemplum*)
 - (2:4-5 transitional clause)
 - A. 2:6-4:6 elaborated argument;
 - knowledge and good works: comparison of two ways
 - (*σύγκρισις/comparatio*)
 - 1. 2:8-23 *ἀνασκευή/refutatio*
 - a. 2:8-15 on avoiding deception
 - b. 2:16-23 on christian liberty
 - 2. 3:1-4:6 *κατασκευή/confirmatio*
 - a. 3:1-4 on seeking heavenly things
 - b. 3:5-11 on putting off vice
 - c. 3:12-17 on putting on virtue
 - d. 3:18-4:1 on domestic harmony
 - e. 4:2-6 on christian vigilance

- 4:7-18 epistolary postscript (no true ἐπίλογος/*peroratio*)
 - 4:7-9 "recommendation" of Tychicus and Onesimus
 - 4:10-14 closing greetings
 - 4:15-17 final commands
 - 4:18a signature
 - 4:18b benediction

CHAPTER TWO: THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

The second step in a rhetorical analysis, according to Kennedy,¹ is to determine the unit's rhetorical situation, which corresponds roughly to the *Sitz im Leben* of form criticism. Although the concept of rhetorical situation underlies all of classical rhetoric,² it was never formulated into a distinct doctrine. In modern times a theory of rhetorical situation has been proposed by L. Bitzer.³

II.A. A DEFINITION OF RHETORICAL SITUATION

Bitzer claims that "...a particular discourse comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance."⁴ He goes on to define such a situation as,

...a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.⁵

¹Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 34.

²As may be readily seen for example in the concern of Plato and Aristotle to tailor a speech to the *psyche* of the audience (*Phdr* 271a; *ArRhet* 2,12ff), or in Quintilian's recognition of the role of circumstances upon the construction of a speech (*InstOr* 2,13,1-7).

³Bitzer, L. "The Rhetorical Situation," *PhilR* 1 (1968), 1-14; subsequently Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation".

⁴*Ibid.*, 4.

⁵*Ibid.*, 6.

Kennedy has noted⁶ that Bitzer's description that situations consist in "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations" in part parallels the classical categories of logic. Moreover, these are in part the materials upon which the invention of a rhetorical discourse is grounded. So in order to bring the content of Bitzer's situation fully into line with classical logic theory, Kennedy has added to Bitzer's list the categories of time and place.

Thus a complex of persons, events, objects, relations, times, and places constitutes a situation. But, says Bitzer, such a situation only becomes a *rhetorical* situation if it is perceived of as being able to be modified through discourse.

The speaker has come out of an audience, the situational audience, in response to the presence of an exigence, with the conviction that the situation can be modified by discourse.⁷

The motivational factor which both exists in and arises from the situation and which compels discourse is what Bitzer calls the "exigence". It is the sense that the situation needs to be modified.

"Any exigence is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be"⁸

In other words, certain of the elements which make up a situation can combine in such a way as to form in the orator the perception of the necessity for, or advantage of, discourse. But beyond merely giving rise to discourse, Bitzer claims, the

⁶Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 35.

⁷Hester, "Placing the Blame", 283.

⁸Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation", 6.

rhetorical situation exerts control over the form of the discourse produced, in the same way as a question influences its answer or a problem influences its solution:

The situation dictates the sorts of observations to be made;
it dictates the significant physical and verbal responses;
and, we must admit, it constrains the words which are
uttered...⁹

The powers of conviction and persuasion which move the orator and are available for him to employ in his discourse in the hope of compelling his audience to the thoughts or actions necessary for the removal or alteration of the exigence Bitzer terms rhetorical "constraints".¹⁰

In conjunction with the rhetorical situation Kennedy mentions the rhetorical problem:

In many rhetorical situations the speaker will be found to face one overriding *rhetorical problem*. His audience is perhaps already prejudiced against him and not disposed to listen to anything he may say; or the audience may not perceive him as having the authority to advance the claims he wishes to make; or what he wishes to say is very complicated and thus hard to follow, or so totally different from what the audience expects that they will not immediately entertain the possibility of its truth.¹¹

Any such rhetorical problem or problems constitutes part of the rhetorical situation influencing the construction and content of a discourse and so should also be examined in the course of a rhetorical analysis.

In summary then, in our discussion of the rhetorical situation of Colossians

⁹Ibid., 5.

¹⁰"...constraints which influence the rhetor and can be brought to bear upon the audience," Ibid., 6.

¹¹Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 36.

it will be necessary to examine the complex of persons, events, objects, relations, times, and places which constitute the situation behind the letter and in the letter and to identify the exigence or exigences which were present in that situation and so motivated the author to write the epistle, as well as to determine the rhetorical constraints available to him in mitigating the exigence. Furthermore, any special rhetorical problems which the author faced in accomplishing his objectives in the letter must be identified and their impact upon the structure and argumentation of the discourse analyzed.

II.B. RHETORICAL SITUATION AND ARGUMENTATION

The rhetorical situation is closely tied up with the argumentation of a document. In attempting to alter or remove the exigence, the orator must tailor his discourse and mold the initial argumentative situation to his actual audience. This argumentative situation is "the influence of the earlier stages of the discussion on the argumentative possibilities open to the speaker."¹² The argumentative situation is of great importance in the actual arrangement (*τάξις/dispositio*) of the discourse since it directs the selection and ordering of topics within the argumentative structure.

Throughout the discourse the argumentative situation naturally fluctuates as it unfolds, since each step of the argument is expected to influence the audience and create an altered argumentative situation. This is noted by Hester:

¹²Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 491 (see also p. 30).

As the arguments take effect, [the orator] must try to predict their effect and judge where the particular audience is along the trajectory [whose end is the removal or alteration of the exigence]....In other words, movement along the trajectory produces new stages in the argumentative situation and new argumentative possibilities open to the speaker, allowing for the introduction of new forms of argumentative discourse.¹³

While working with and within the rhetorical situational constraints, this dynamic argumentative structure allows the orator a great deal of freedom and creativity in the construction of his discourse.¹⁴ As mentioned in chapter one, the ability needed by the orator in this creative and imaginative stage of his work is called *intellectio*.

II.C. COLOSSIAN'S RHETORICAL SITUATION IN RHETORICAL COMMENTATORS

In commentators concerned with the rhetorical analysis of Colossians there is relatively little to be found regarding the rhetorical situation or exigence which gave rise to the epistle.

Melanchthon nowhere sets out clearly what he thinks the rhetorical situation is. He does identify the *status* of the epistle as the "nature of the Gospel".¹⁵ And it is further apparent that he believes that the Apostle was motivated to write because of a misunderstanding on the part of his audience as regards the relationship of good works to salvation.¹⁶

¹³Hester, "Placing the Blame", 284.

¹⁴See Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 11-50.

¹⁵Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 29.

¹⁶"[The Apostle] fully distinguishes between Christian righteousness and the human righteousness that is gathered by our industry and by our strength, whether from the commands of men or from the Mosaic law," *ibid.*, 29.

Hatfield believes that the impetus for writing the epistle was Epaphras' arrival in Rome with news of the dangerous situation in the church (although this point becomes difficult if we conclude that Epaphras had been imprisoned with Paul for some time). Paul then penned the letter from his imprisonment, sending it on its way with Tychicus.

According to Hatfield¹⁷, the controlling exigence of the rhetorical situation behind Colossians is the "Colossian Heresy", which he defines as "Incipient Gnosticism". He acknowledges that Paul also discusses other themes, including: 1) his own ministry (1:24-29), 2) morality (3:5-14), 3) prejudice (3:11), 4) family relationships (3:18-21), and 5) employment relationships (3:22-4:1).

As rhetorical constraints, Hatfield identifies the fact that there were "heretics" in the church, and the fact that Paul only knew the situation second-hand although he may have supervised missionary activities there during his long residence in Ephesus (Acts 19).¹⁸

Aletti, like Melanchthon, gives no clear statement of what he considers the rhetorical situation or exigence to be. He suggests that some situation in the church in Colossae and/or with the Apostle must have been the impetus for the letter, but unsatisfyingly stops there.¹⁹ The main issues of Colossians he does identify in his analysis of the *partitio*: 1) Paul's struggle to proclaim the gospel, 2) faithfulness to

¹⁷Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 157ff.

¹⁸It seems that Hatfield's "rhetorical constraints" are equivalent to Bitzer's "rhetorical problems".

¹⁹Cf. Aletti, *Colossiens*, 40-42, 274.

the gospel received, and 3) the sanctification of believers.²⁰ He does believe that the congregation was threatened by some sort of heretical philosophy, but again fails to attempt a definition.

II.D. THE SITUATIONAL COMPLEX OF COLOSSIANS

Let us now look at the text of Colossians in an attempt to determine the complex of persons, events, objects, relations, times, and places which form the situation out of which and in which it was written.

The main figure in the letter is Paul. He is portrayed as the author or at least as the co-author (1:1). His authorship of the letter is, however, in doubt.²¹ Since the answer to the authorship question will profoundly affect any reconstruction of the rhetorical situation, it is best to examine this topic in greater detail at this point before attempting to discuss times, places, events, or other elements of the situational complex.

EXCURSUS: The Question of Authorship

In what follows the evidence about authorship will be set out as briefly as

²⁰Aletti, *Colossiens*, 119ff.

²¹That disagreement over authorship still continues is seen by a brief look at some of the more recent commentaries. Pauline authorship is supported, for example, by Aletti, *Colossiens*, as well as by Martin, R.P. *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon* (Atlanta: Knox, 1991), and Wall, R.W. *Colossians and Philemon* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993). But Pauline authorship is denied by Yates, R. *The Epistle to the Colossians* (London: Epworth, 1993), who believes the letter is post-Pauline and by Donelson, L.R. *Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), who also considers Colossians as deutero-Pauline, a creative modification of Pauline theology for a new situation.

possible with a view to establishing a reasonable historical setting for the letter. This is not an attempt to prove or disprove Pauline authorship—that would exceed the scope and limitations of this work—but is rather an attempt to establish a plausible historical foundation upon which to build a rhetorical analysis. It should also be noted that in the process of analysis the preliminary assumption of authorship may either be confirmed or found to be in need of modification.

In the earliest direct references of the Church Fathers Colossians was accepted as a genuine epistle of the Apostle Paul, as it claims for itself, and was attested as universally recognized by the Church as such.²² It was included among the genuine works of Paul by both the Muratorian canon and Marcion. There are also allusions to Colossians in earlier Christian authors.²³

It was not until 1838 that its authorship was seriously brought into question through the work of E.T. Mayerhoff.²⁴ F.C. Baur and the Tübingen school also opposed Pauline authorship and proposed the view that the epistle was composed to

²²E.g. Irenaeus of Lyon specifically identifies Colossians as his source in *AdvHaer* 3,14,1 (Col 4:14); 4,16,1 (Col 2:11); 5,12,3 (Col 3:5,9); 5,14,2 (Col 1:21-22); and in 1,27,2 he specifically recognizes Colossians as one of the letters of Paul; so also Eusebius, *HistEccl* 3,3,4-5; Tertullian, *DePraescrHaer* 7; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom* 1,1; *Ext.Theod.* 13,4; 19,4; Hippolytus of Rome, *PG* 10,869 (Col 1:18); *Elenchos* 5,12,5; 8,13,2 (Col 1,19); 10,10,4 (Col 2:9).

²³E.g. Ignatius of Antioch, *Trall* 5,2; *Rom* 5,3; *Smyrn.* 6,1; the *Epistle of Barnabas* 12,7c contains a verbatim quotation of Col. 1:16 without attributing it to any source; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 84,2; 85,2; 135,3; 138,2; and at 100,2 he quotes Col. 1:15-17, though again without reference; Theophilus of Antioch, *Autolycus* 22.

²⁴Mayerhoff, E.T. *Der Brief an die Colosser, mit vornehmlicher Berücksichtigung der drei Pastoralbriefe kritisch geprüft* (Berlin: H. Schultze, 1838); subsequently Mayerhoff, *Brief an die Colosser*. Mayerhoff believed that Colossians is dependent upon Ephesians, that it contains non-Pauline concepts, and that it reflects the second century dispute against Cerinthus.

oppose second century gnosticism. Although Baur's theories have fallen out of favor, many of Mayerhoff's original objections to Pauline authorship remain influential to today.

Although a number of arguments have been advanced against Pauline authorship, the most important can be separated into three categories: questions concerning the epistle's language, questions concerning its content or theology, and questions concerning its relationship to Ephesians. The letter's language and theology are claimed to depart from the norms of the undisputed Pauline corpus.

I. Questions of Language

Included among the questions of language are the epistle's unique vocabulary and style of construction.²⁵ For example, 34 *hapax legomena* occur in Colossians as well as 28 words which, although they appear elsewhere in the NT, do not occur in the core Pauline works. There are another ten words which are common to Colossians and Ephesians alone and another 15 which appear only in Colossians, Ephesians, and the antilegomena. This makes a total of 87 "unusual" words in the document. Certain words are also missing from the epistle which elsewhere in Paul are prominent terms (such as νόμος, δικαιοσύνη, σωτηρία, ἀποκάλυψις, ἁμαρτία [in the singular], and πιστεύειν). And certain connective words and particles which

²⁵For a brief overview of the linguistic and stylistic peculiarities of Colossians see Lohse, *Colossians*, 84-91; for an in-depth treatment see Percy, E. *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe* (SHVL 39; Lund: Gleerup, 1946), esp. pp. 36-66 (subsequently Percy, *Probleme*) and Bujard, W. *Stilanalytische Untersuchungen zum Kolosserbrief als Beitrag zur Methodik von Sprachvergleichen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

appear elsewhere in Paul (such as *εἰ μὴ, μόνον, οὐκέτι, οὐδέ, διό, and ἄρα*) are infrequent or absent from Colossians.

As regards style, Colossians contains a number of constructions which are less common in the undisputed Paulines: *derivatio* (*παρηγμένον*—the repetition of word stems—e.g. *δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι* in 1:11),²⁶ the extensive use of participles, the piling up of synonyms (e.g. *ἀγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους* in 1:22) and of dependent genitives (e.g. *εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης* in 1:13), the use of infinitives of purpose or result (e.g. *περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου* in 1:10), and the use of *ὃ ἐστίν* as a formulaic phrase introducing an explanation (e.g. *ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστίν ἡ ἐκκλησία* in 1:18). This last device is found nowhere else in the Pauline corpus. The author frequently combines such constructions in long and complicated sentences (e.g. 1:9-20 is a single sentence consisting of 218 words!). Commentators often describe this style as "liturgical" and usually attribute it to reliance upon "traditional materials".²⁷

²⁶See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 328f.

²⁷Bujard concluded that his stylistic analysis disproved Pauline authorship because of the cumulative effect of minor stylistic differences. His work is extensive and detailed and has had a strong impact on the authorship debate. However, several weaknesses exist in his study. He fails to compare Colossians with any distinctly non-Pauline documents; there is therefore no control group. He also begins with a presumption of what is authentically Pauline (and thus in effect of what is not). This dictates in advance the spectrum of deviation permitted for Paul and cannot take into account factors which may have altered the letter's style, such as reliance upon traditional or secondary sources, or work in conjunction with others in its production.

More recent stylistic analyses remain divided. Kenny, A. *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), supports the authenticity of Colossians with his conclusion that 12 of the Pauline epistles are authentic, having been written by one versatile author. Neumann, K.J. *The Authenticity of the Pauline Epistles in the Light of Stylostatistical Analysis* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), while less enthusiastic than Kenny (he denies the authenticity of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), through a combination of stylistic analyses places not only Colossians, but also Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians firmly within the authentically Pauline corpus. Barr, G.K. "Scale and the Pauline Epistles," *IrBS* 17 (1995), 22-41, (subsequently Barr, "Pauline Epistles") also argues for the

All of these arguments may themselves, however, be brought into question. Vocabulary itself is a poor indicator of authorship since it can be influenced by several factors including occasion, date, and circumstances of writing, topics discussed, source materials consulted or incorporated, scribal license or joint authorship, or even the variable and indeterminable limits of the author's linguistic creativity.²⁸ As for *hapax legomena*, they occur frequently elsewhere in Paul; for example, Galatians and Philippians—letters of comparable length—have 31 and 36 respectively. Furthermore, Colossians contains 11 words which appear nowhere else in the NT except in the undisputed Paulines. Many of the rare or "non-Pauline" words in Colossians appear in sections of the epistle which are often considered as pre-existent traditional material (such as 1:15-20). And the omission of certain key terms or connectives is not unprecedented (e.g. *νόμος* never occurs in 2 Corinthians, *δικαιοσύνη* is lacking from 1Thessalonians, and *σωτηρία* appears in neither Galatians nor 1 Corinthians; *διό* occurs only once in Galatians, and *ἄρα* is absent from Philippians). Also present in the epistle is the Pauline tendency of employing words with multiple prefixes such as *ἀποκαταλλάσσειν* (1:20,22),

authenticity of Colossians (and others of the greater Pauline corpus) on the ground of its similarity of scale with the recognized Paulines; see also his "Contrast in Scale and Genre in the Letters of Paul and Seneca," *IrBSt* 18 (1996), 16-25 (subsequently Barr, "Paul and Seneca").

Mealand, D.L. "The Extent of the Pauline Corpus: A Multivariate Approach," *JSNT* 59 (1995), 61-92, on the other hand cautiously expresses doubt as to Colossians' authenticity, finding that it tends to cluster with Ephesians outside of the undisputed Paulines.

²⁸Richards, E.R. *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), suggests that the variety of style within the Paulines may be due to the use of a secretary, while the content remains "Pauline" since it was approved by Paul; (subsequently, Richards, *Secretary*). Arnold, C.E. *The Colossian Syncretism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 6f., supposes Pauline authorship for the letter and considers variations of style within the capability of Paul.

ἀντανάπληροῦν (1:24), ἀπεκδέεσθαι (2:15; 3:9), and ἀνταπόδοσις (3:24) (as προσανάπληροῦν in 2 Cor. 9:12; 11:9; συμπαραλαμβάνειν in Gal. 2:1; and ἐξανάστασις in Phil. 3:11).

Many of Colossians' unusual stylistic devices (apart from ὃ ἐστίν) occur in the Pauline *Hauptbriefe*, though less frequently. *Derivatio* for example occurs in 1 Cor. 7:20 (ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἣ ἐκλήθη); the accumulation of synonyms in Rom. 1:18 (πάσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν) as well as in Rom. 1:21,25,29, etc.; the accumulation of dependent genitives in Rom. 4:11 (σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ); the use of infinitives of purpose/result in 2 Cor. 11:2 (παράσῃσαι τῷ Χριστῷ). Nor are lengthy and complex sentences themselves an indicator that the text is non-Pauline (consider Rom. 1:1-7 and 2:5-10 with 93 and 87 words respectively). Furthermore the epistle shares several characteristics with the undisputed Paulines including structural elements such as its greeting and conclusion, its prayer of thanksgiving (1:3ff), its connective and introductory phrases (e.g. θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι in 2:1, οὖν in 2:6,16; 3:1,5), the inclusion of messages and greetings in the closing verses, the use of Pauline formulaic expressions (e.g. ἐν Χριστῷ in 1:2,4,28; ἐν κυρίῳ in 3:18,20; 4:7,17; σὺν Χριστῷ in 2:12,20; 3:1,3) and stylistic peculiarities (e.g. superfluous use of καί after διὰ τοῦτο in 1:9 as in 1 Thes. 2:13; 3:5; Rom. 13:6 [in the NT this occurs only in the Paulines]; οἱ ἅγιοι αὐτοῦ in 1:26 as in 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Thes. 1:10; ἐν μέρει in 2:16 as in only 2 Cor. 3:10; 9:3; and the peculiar use of certain verbs such as

χαρίζεσθαι = to forgive in 2:13 and 3:13 as in only 2 Cor. 2:7,10; 12:13 [and Eph. 4:32]).

II. Questions of Theology

As for questions concerning the letter's content, some scholars have suggested that the epistle contains theological statements which are non-Pauline. These generally involve the letter's Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and attitude to apostolic authority.²⁹

A. Christology

The high Christology of the epistle is viewed as going beyond the Christology of the main Pauline letters in its exaltation of Christ. In particular, Col. 1:15-19 and 2:9-10 teach that Christ is the head of every "principality and power" and that the entire fullness of the deity dwells "bodily" in him.

It is true that the Christology of Colossians exceeds that of the core Pauline epistles, but there is no evidence that this Christology contradicts Paul. The divine infilling of Christ is hinted at in other passages, for example Rom. 9:5; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; and Phil. 2:5ff. As for Christ's rule over the cosmic powers, the theme of Christ's universal lordship in the undisputed Paulines is undeniable. There is no need to see Colossians as anything more than a fuller and more systematic exposition of the lordship of Christ referred to elsewhere in the Pauline corpus (e.g.

²⁹See for instance, Lohse, *Colossians*, 177-183; O'Brien, P.T. *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco: Word, 1982), xlv-xlix; subsequently O'Brien, *Colossians*.

Rom. 8:38f; 9:5; 1 Cor. 1:24; 2:8; 8:6; 2 Cor. 4:4; 5:10f.; Gal. 4:3-9; Phil. 2:10).

What differences exist in the Christology of Colossians may be attributed to development in Paul's theology³⁰ or elaboration of doctrine in view of the situation he perceived at Colossae.³¹

B. Ecclesiology

The metaphor of the church as a body given in Col. 1:18 differs from that appearing in Rom. 12:4f and 1 Cor. 12:12ff. In Colossians Christ is the head of the body while in Romans and Corinthians Paul attributes no special place of authority to the head which is counted as but another functional member of the body (all members are to work together for the common good).

It is true that the metaphor has changed from one of the church as a body which benefits from the diverse functions of its various members to one of the church as the body in hierarchical submission to its head, Christ. This hierarchical imagery is in complete conformity with the Pauline concept of the lordship of Christ over the Christian. So the question is really not one of content but of style. To what extent can an author vary his metaphoric imagery (if we can even say it varies from established Pauline imagery since the identity of Christ with the church as his body is in fact present in the core Paulines [see 1 Cor. 1:13; 12:12f])? Such a change of

³⁰Even in the undisputed letters of Paul a development in his thought can be traced; see for example C.H. Buck and G. Taylor *St. Paul: A Study of the Development of his Thought* (New York: Scribner's, 1969); C.H. Dodd, "The Mind of Paul: II" *BJRL* 18 (1934), 68-110.

³¹E.g. O'Brien, *Colossians*, xli; Percy, *Probleme*, 43; Martin, *Colossians*, 40.

metaphors seems well within the capabilities of the vast majority of writers and therefore the Pauline authorship of Colossians should not be discarded on the basis of the epistle's ecclesiology. Additionally it may as reasonably be asked, if a transformation of metaphors has actually occurred, why would a pseudepigrapher alter a Pauline metaphor if he were attempting to produce a document after the style of Paul?³²

C. Eschatology

It is also contended that eschatology in Colossians has slipped into the background with past and present fulfillment pushing out future eschatological fulfillment, so that Colossians displays a realized eschatology whereas the *Hauptbriefe* do not. For example, believers are said to have been raised with Christ (2:12f; 3:1) at baptism so that the future event becomes the revelation of life already experienced by Christians which is still hidden with Christ in God (3:3f). This "accomplished resurrection" is referred to as the basis of the letter's ethical commands. Mention of the parousia, the bodily resurrection, and the last judgement are apparently absent from the epistle and the word ἐλπίς (1:5; 3:4) expresses the object hoped for rather than the usual Pauline meaning of subjective Christian

³²See also York, G. *The Church as the Body of Christ in the Pauline Corpus. A Re-examination* (New York: University Press of America, 1991), who concludes that throughout the Paulines (1 Corinthians, Romans, but also Colossians and Ephesians), Paul's use of σῶμα is based upon the image of the human body, not specifically upon Christ's body. As a result, suggestions that the mystical, metaphorical, or cosmic body of Christ is the intended image are untenable (he also argues similarly for Paul's use of κεφαλή).

experience (as with faith and love).³³

The objective use of "hope", however, does occur in the chief Pauline epistles (see Rom. 8:24 and Gal. 5:5) and so should not be considered as non-Pauline. It is true that greater emphasis in Colossians is placed upon realized eschatology. This should not necessarily be taken to imply non-Pauline authorship either. The undisputed letters of Paul do contain instances of realized eschatology (e.g. Rom. 4:17; 5:21; 8:1-11) and Colossians contains elements of future eschatology (e.g.: a future parousia in 3:4; a future divine judgement upon the disobedient in 3:6 and 25; a future reward for the obedient in 3:24; and an implied future presentation of the believer in holiness before God in 1:22f and 28). And the image of having been raised with Christ which is found in Colossians clearly parallels the Pauline doctrine expressed in passages such as Rom. 6:1ff of the believer's new life in Christ. The old man is dead to sin, the new man has been made alive to God in righteousness. So although the eschatology and soteriology characteristic of Paul in the *Hauptbriefe* are more in the background in Colossians, they are nonetheless present. Again, it is possible that the situation at hand motivated this heightened emphasis upon realized eschatology.

³³See Bornkamm, G. "Die Hoffnung im Kolosserbrief. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage der Echtheit des Briefes" in *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zur Patristik: Festschrift für Erich Klostermann* (TU 77; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961), 56-64; and Lohse, E. "Pauline Theology in the Letter to the Colossians" *NTS* 15 (1968/69), 211-220.

D. Appeal to Apostolic Authority

A few scholars³⁴ see evidence of "early catholicism" in the epistle, namely in supposed authorial reliance upon a traditional baptismal liturgy or increased emphasis upon the authority of the office of apostle, either to grant apostolic authority to Epaphras³⁵ or to the gospel message.³⁶

This theory has found little support among scholars. No where in the epistle is apostolic authority actually attributed to Epaphras. It is true he is praised, but praise and recommendation are given no differently to others in the other Paulines (e.g. Rom. 16; Phil. 2:25ff; Phlm. 4ff). As for the charge concerning the Gospel, a stronger connection between the gospel and Paul's apostleship is found in Gal. 1:11ff. Nor is there any evidence that the author is relying upon baptismal formulae.

The theology of Colossians does not compel the rejection of Pauline authorship. The apparently "unusual" theology of the epistle does appear elsewhere in Paul and many of the theological points stressed in the chief epistles appear in Colossians. The differences can be attributed to differences of emphasis and purpose or as resulting from the use of secondary materials³⁷ or as a result of the unique

³⁴In particular Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy," 166f., and Marxsen, W. *Introduction to the New Testament. An Approach to its Problems*, trans. G. Buswell (Oxford: Blackwells, 1968), 177ff; subsequently Marxsen, *Introduction*.

³⁵Marxsen, *Introduction*, 180.

³⁶Lohse, *Colossians*, 68; Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy", 166ff.

³⁷E.g. Cannon, *Traditional Materials*. Ryen, J.O. "Hvem skrev Kolosserbrevet? Til diskusjonen om Kolosserbrevets ekthet," *TTK* 62 (1991), 175-186, after reviewing the discussions of the 1970's and 80's about the letter's authorship, likewise concludes that its peculiarities may be due to the

situation at Colossae or even from the input of a secretary³⁸ or co-author³⁹ and need not require the postulation of a pseudepigrapher.

Theological similarities with the undisputed Paulines include the Pauline usage of theological locality (ἐν Χριστῷ, ἐν κύριῳ, etc.), the doctrines of unity with Christ via baptism (2:11,12) and of being freed from legal regulations (2:14,20,21), the contrast between the old man and the new (3:5-17), and the tension between imperatives and indicatives in the hortatory section. The letter's proximity to the generally recognized epistle to Philemon can also be viewed as evidence for Pauline authorship. Both epistles claim to derive from Paul and Timothy (Col. 1:1; Phlm. 1). In both Paul is in prison (Col. 4:3,10,18; Phlm. 1,9,10,13,23). Eight of the nine personal names mentioned in Philemon occur again in Colossians.

III. Questions Concerning the Epistle's Relationship to Ephesians

The relation of Colossians to Ephesians is only problematic when the epistle

special situation faced or the use of traditional materials.

³⁸So Bahr, G.J. "Paul and Letter Writing in the Fifth Century", *CBQ* 28 (1966), 465-477; Benoit, P. "Rapports littéraires entre les épîtres aux Colossiens et aux Éphésiens", in *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze. Festschrift für Prof. Joseph Schmid*, eds. J. Blinzler, O. Kuss and F. Mussner (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 21f.

³⁹So Ollrog, W.H. *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter. Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission*, (WMANT 50; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1979), 220, 237 (subsequently Ollrog, *Paulus*); Schweizer, E. "The Letter to the Colossians—Neither Pauline nor Post-Pauline?", in *Pluralisme et oecuménisme en recherches théologiques: mélanges offerts au R.P. Dockx*, eds. Y. Congar et al. (Paris: Duculot, 1976), 14, and *The Letter to the Colossians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), who attributes the letter to Timothy.

is seen to derive from or be dependent on Ephesians⁴⁰ or when it is hypothesized that the author of Ephesians reworked and expanded an original Colossians in order to bolster the authority of his own epistle⁴¹. The main arguments against both of these hypotheses are derived from the general, though by no means absolute, tendencies that the shorter of two texts (i.e. Colossians) is usually the earlier and the more theologically elaborated of two texts (i.e. Ephesians) is usually the later. That the development and amplification of ideas appears to run from Colossians to Ephesians rather than vice versa is supported by the majority of scholarship.⁴²

IV. A Proposal for Pauline Authorship

Among those who reject Pauline authorship for the letter the general view is that the text is the work of a student or admirer of Paul or from a school of Pauline tradition (probably based in Ephesus) active in the sub-apostolic age, not

⁴⁰So Mayerhoff, *Brief an die Colosser*; Synge, F.C. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: A Theological Commentary* (London: S.P.C.K., 1941); and Coutts, J. "The Relationship of Ephesians and Colossians," *NTS* 4 (1957-58), 201-207.

⁴¹So Masson, *Colossiens*; also Harrison, "Onesimus", 271-274; Holtzmann, *Kritik*, 104-121. Such theories, however, as M.C. Kiley points out in his *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 43, (subsequently Kiley, *Pseudepigraphy*) are highly subjective: "The major problem with all these theories of interpolations is that the whole process is so arbitrary. Each commentator has his own rules, and to make matters worse, often he doesn't tell us exactly how his criteria dictate his decision on the cited verses. While not without some logic, the suggestions of the various commentators must remain in the realm of unfounded conjecture."

⁴²See further, Lohse, *Colossians*, 4; Aletti, *Colossiens*, 25-27, 280. Other possibilities have been offered as solutions in understanding the relationship of the two letters to one another including that the two letters are not directly related but derive their similarities from a third common source, or that the two letters were dictated simultaneously with their dissimilarities resulting from the need to tailor each to the needs of distinct communities or to the input of different co-workers. Best, E. "Who Used Whom? The Relationship of Ephesians and Colossians," *NTS* 43 (1997), 72-96, after reviewing various attempts to discover the relationship between the two documents, concludes that no definitive solution is possible.

long after the Apostle's death.⁴³ "It has become a commonplace in NT studies to express the question of date...in the following way: If by Paul, as late as possible; if by another, as early as possible."⁴⁴ Yet the general view of such scholars is also that the epistle was intended to address a real situation:

"Whoever the author, the situation is real. There is no reason to doubt the address to Colossae, with attention to other congregations in the Lycus Valley cities (4:13,15f), nor the actuality of the specific conflict that occasioned the letter."⁴⁵

While solving some problems, theories which propose non-Pauline authorship create new ones. By desiring to assign an early date to the epistle (only some 10-20 years after the Apostle's death) and to accept the reality of the situation addressed they establish a couple of possible but improbable assumptions.

The first assumption is that pseudepigraphy is an (or in this case, the most) effective method of persuasion. But in order for pseudepigraphy to be truly effective its claim of authenticity must be accepted at face value: only then does it retain its special appeal of *ethos*. If both author and recipient know it to be pseudepigraphical then it forsakes its *raison d'être*: it would be easier and just as effective to write a

⁴³So Bornkamm, G. *Paul* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 86; Conzelmann, H. "Paulus und die Weisheit," *NTS* 12 (1965-66), 233-234; Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy", 149-168; Lohse, *Colossians*, 177-183; Marxsen, *Introduction*, 177-186; Patzia, A. "The Deutero-Pauline Hypothesis: An Attempt at Clarification," *EvQ* 52 (1980), 33.

⁴⁴Harrington, D.J. "Christians and Jews in Colossians," in *Diaspora Jews and Judaism. Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel*, eds. J.A. Overman and R.S. MacLennan (SFSHJ 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 155 [153-161]; Lindemann, A. "Die Gemeinde von 'Kolossä'. Erwägungen zum 'Sitz im Leben' eines pseudopaulinischen Briefes," *Wort und Dienst* 16 (1981), 111-134, believes that the epistle was really intended for the church in Laodicea in approximately 70-80 A.D.

⁴⁵Meeks, W.A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 125-126.

letter with expressions such as "As Paul taught us...". (Worse still, it could be looked upon as a forgery!) In the case of Colossians, if the author knows that his work is pseudepigraphical but his audience does not and if the situation described in the letter is at all real, the result is perplexity: "How is it that a letter from Paul addressed to us reaches us only now 15 years later, yet pertains exactly to our present condition?" Is it plausible that such a letter would be accepted by the churches of the Lycus Valley such a short time after the Apostle's ministry in Asia, with living witnesses about and converts from that time in the churches?

The second assumption is similar: that the supposed author would choose to write a pseudepigraphical letter when other more rhetorically effective and morally praiseworthy opportunities were at hand.⁴⁶ If a "student" of Paul were writing the epistle from Ephesus not many years after Paul's death he would have available to him several more persuasive and easier opportunities. If he were seeking authority for his writing he could appeal to the Scriptures, to other letters of Paul, perhaps to his own experience with Paul or of that of other living disciples of the Apostle. He could appeal to authority figures within the church, to elders appointed by Paul who were still alive, or to the bishop, or to the practices of the other churches. He himself might well be a figure of authority, or he might ask a person of authority to write to the errant congregation. Just such an approach is in fact seen in texts of

⁴⁶Kiley, *Pseudepigraphy*, claims that an honorable tradition of pseudepigraphy existed. His main proof for this (in addition to dubious interpretations of the fourth cent. A.D. authors Salvian and Olympiodorus) is that the copying of famous authors occurred in classical school exercises. He fails to admit, however, that this was carried out as a teaching method (*imitatio*) and not because forgery was highly regarded. He too lightly dismisses the more important and unambiguous testimony from antiquity, such as the burning of pseudepigraphical works attributed to Numa.

the Apostolic Fathers. This would be a more effective and easier way of solving problems in the Lycus Valley since it would not carry the dangers of pseudepigraphy mentioned above and since it would not require the labor of creating and maintaining a credible situation and cohesive argumentation throughout a false document.⁴⁷

The basic problem lies in the desire to accept the validity of the situation expressed in the epistle and an early date of writing while rejecting Pauline authorship. If Pauline authorship is to be rejected, a different situation must be reconstructed. An early date is still likely (c. 70-80 A.D.) due to the early allusions to the epistle. The theological issues discussed are also likely as the author presumably is seeking to persuade his audience upon certain concrete points, but the addressees would probably be other than those mentioned in the letter in order to avoid the discovery of the pseudepigraphy. Moreover, the conjectured author would probably be writing in this manner due to a lack of personal authority or because the contents of his message were unacceptable to his audience and had to be clothed with apostolic *ethos* to gain a credible hearing.

In addition to these practical difficulties with regard to the pseudepigraphy of Colossians, there exists no historical evidence for a Pauline school at Ephesus or elsewhere.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Meade, D.G. *Pseudonymity and Canon* (WUNT 39; Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 9-16, discusses these and other arguments against pseudepigraphy in greater detail; (subsequently, Meade, *Pseudonymity*).

⁴⁸Meade, *Pseudonymity*, 9f., for example, discounts the very existence of any such school.

As mentioned above, the objective of this inquiry into the authenticity of the epistle is not to prove or disprove Pauline authorship, but to establish a reasonable starting point from which to begin a rhetorical analysis. Although Colossians has certain features uncharacteristic of Paul's undisputed letters, it also contains a vast amount of clearly Pauline features, the origins of which are yet to be explained convincingly apart from some connection with the Apostle. Since the evidence against Pauline authorship is not conclusive and raises questions of its own, and since reasonable explanations exist in support of Pauline authorship, for the purpose of this study Pauline authorship will be presumed. Any evidence in support of or against this presumption which is gained through the rhetorical analysis will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

Nevertheless, the presumed concept of Pauline authorship should be a broad one. Colossians may have been written entirely by Paul or in part, perhaps with the active assistance of an amanuensis or co-worker and incorporating traditional materials but signed by the Apostle.⁴⁹ The prescript specifically mentions Timothy (1:1), perhaps suggesting him as co-author, and Epaphras is singled out as one who has related elements of the situation in Colossae to the Apostle (1:7-8). It seems that Paul did not know the situation from first-hand experience (2:1) and therefore would presumably have relied upon Epaphras and Onesimus (4:9) as sources of information about the situation in Colossae, perhaps even using terminology and descriptions

⁴⁹Richards, *Secretary*, cautions that Paul's use of secretaries could have far-reaching consequences on the issue of to what extent his letters reflect not only his own organization, style, or vocabulary, but also his own thoughts and arguments.

supplied by them. The closing salutation in 4:18 also strongly suggests the co-operation of others in the production of the letter.

Having established a plausible authorship for the letter, let us now return to our examination of its complex of persons, events, objects, relations, times, and places in order plausibly to reconstruct its rhetorical situation, although first a brief note about the sources of information for this study needs to be made.

Colossians is one of the seven NT epistles which claim to have been written by Paul during his times of imprisonment. Three of these—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—stand out from the others on account of their unique tone and common references to people and places. The date, interrelationship, and location of writing of these three epistles is highly uncertain—regardless of whether or not Pauline authorship is assumed. There is insufficient evidence either intra- or extra-textually to determine these points firmly, and thus plausible reconstructions based upon the few available facts are necessary to draw a whole and functional picture of the historical and rhetorical situations behind these epistles. As demonstrated above, Pauline authorship of Colossians is plausible (although unable to be proven conclusively) and will be maintained for the present study. For this reason the situational information lodged in the text will be taken at face value. Additionally, in order to formulate a wider, more encompassing reconstruction of the rhetorical situation of Colossians further evidence will be drawn directly (also at face value,

unless contradictory) from the other available primary sources, namely from Acts⁵⁰ and Philemon, while cautionary usage may also be made of Ephesians.

Our examination of the rhetorical complex will be facilitated if we order our investigation around the Aristotelian tripartite division of discourses into speaker, speech, and audience.

II.D.1. The Speaker

Ten individuals are mentioned in the epistle within the group of the author and his companions: Paul, Timothy, Epaphras, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark the cousin of Barnabas, Jesus called Justus, Luke the doctor, and Demas. Paul is suggested as the author by the prescript (1:1), the postscript signature (4:18), and by the first person singular narrative element in certain passages (e.g. 1:24f; 2:1-5). Timothy is mentioned in the prescript and so may have been a co-author to some extent, although he is mentioned nowhere else within the epistle. He is again named in the prescript of Philemon as a co-worker, but not in the prescript to Ephesians. There also exist several first person plural passages (such as 1:9,28; 4:3) which apparently refer to Paul and his companions although this is never explicitly stated. And as noted above others may have been involved in the creation of the epistle. Paul tells how Epaphras taught the good news to the Colossians and how he has

⁵⁰In a recent article Wenham, D. "Piecing Together Paul's Life: A Review Article," *EvQ* 68 (1996), 47-58, in addition to his discussion of various chronologies of Paul's life, argues for the plausibility of Acts and its usefulness as an historical source.

reported the Colossians' love to him and his companions (1:8). Epaphras and Onesimus are both recorded as being from Colossae (4:9,12) and so would possess excellent first-hand information about the situation there.

Tychicus is recorded as the letter-bearer who, along with Onesimus, has been sent by Paul to inform the Colossians about his and his companions' present situation and to encourage their hearts (4:7ff). Tychicus appears again in the postscript of Ephesians in the same role (Eph 6:21f) but is not mentioned in Philemon. One reason for the lack of situational information in the letter could very well be the fact that Tychicus and Onesimus were going to report all the details so that there was no need to include them in the epistle.

In Paul's company were also three Jewish Christians, Aristarchus, Mark the cousin of Barnabas, and Jesus called Justus (4:10f). These three are said to have been a great comfort for the Apostle due to their common Jewish heritage. They, together with the apparently Gentile Luke and Demas, send greetings to the congregation, which may imply more personal acquaintance with its members (4:10-11,14).

Paul states that he is in chains (4:3,18) for the gospel's sake and in a state of suffering (1:24). He is joined by Aristarchus as his co-prisoner (4:10). Although in the text of Colossians no other individual is mentioned as being imprisoned with Paul, that other of his companions were captive with him should not be ruled out. In Philemon 23 Epaphras is specifically mentioned as a co-inmate, while Aristarchus, Mark, Demas, and Luke are termed co-laborers. It is certainly

plausible that Epaphras was imprisoned with Paul as this could explain why he, the founder of the church at Colossae, would not be returning with Tychicus, Onesimus, and the letter (4:12f).

As to the location of Paul's imprisonment and the date of writing, it is known that Paul was imprisoned for long periods of time both in Rome and Caesarea Maritima (Acts 23:23-26:32; 28:16-31). He was imprisoned over night in Philippi (Acts 16:23-40). Other imprisonments may have occurred (see 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:23) although where, when, or for how long is completely unknown.⁵¹

The Apostle's imprisonment at Philippi was very short. It does not allow time for the visiting of guests or the writing and sending of letters as these three prison epistles demand, and so must be excluded from consideration as a possible situational background for Colossians.

Some commentators have suggested that these three epistles were written during an Ephesian captivity.⁵² The theory has support in that Ephesus is not far from Colossae and so would better explain the presence of Onesimus as well as perhaps his other companions. Additionally, Paul's mention of an expected release and visit in Philemon 22 fits more plausibly with Ephesus than with Rome or Caesarea. If this hypothesis is correct, the epistle could be dated to sometime between the autumn of 54 A.D and late summer of 57 A.D. Against this hypothesis

⁵¹For summaries of the various theories proposed for the imprisonment question see Beare, F.W. *The Epistle to the Colossians* (IB 11; New York: Abingdon, 1955), 135-137 and O'Brien, *Colossians*, xlix-liv.

⁵²For example Duncan, G.S. *St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry. A Reconstruction with Special Reference to the Ephesian Origin of the Imprisonment Epistles* (London: Hodder, 1929); Martin, *Colossians*, 26ff, and Ollrog, *Paulus*, 59.

is the silence of Acts concerning any such imprisonment (see Acts 19).⁵³ Furthermore, an Ephesian imprisonment would have to have taken place before Paul sent Timothy to Macedonia (Acts 19:22), and it would have to have been of a lengthy enough duration and freedom to allow the writing of these letters, the visits of friends and conducting of business, and the preaching of the gospel (see 4:3f; Eph. 6:19f).

The imprisonment at Caesarea Maritima⁵⁴ is possible since it was of sufficient duration and freedom to have allowed the situation necessary for the writing of these letters as hinted at in them (Acts 24:23; Col. 4:3f; Eph. 6:19f). Additionally, a comparison with Acts 20:4 points to similarities in the list of Paul's travelling companions and those mentioned with him in Colossians (Aristarchus, Tychicus, Timothy). This would provide a date of writing of c. 58-60 A.D. However, against a Caesarean imprisonment is the lack in Acts of any thought about an early release or visit to Philemon (Philemon 22). The proposal for such a visit can also be seen as conflicting with Paul's stated desire to go next to Rome (Acts 19:21), although there is no reason why he could not travel through Asia visiting the churches on his way to Rome.

⁵³This becomes further unlikely for those who put stock in the traditional view that Luke wrote Acts since it ignores the conflict presented by the presence of Luke with Paul at the writing of Colossians (Col. 4:14) while he is apparently absent from Ephesus during the Apostle's extended ministry there: according to the "We" passages of Acts, Luke joined Paul at some point in Greece or Macedonia after the completion of his two year ministry in Ephesus; see Acts 20:1ff.

⁵⁴This hypothesis is supported by Gunther, J.J. *Paul: Messenger and Exile. A Study in the Chronology of his Life and Letters* (Valley Forge: Judson, 1972), 98-112, and Reicke, B. "Caesarea, Rome and the Captivity Epistles," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays presented to F.F. Bruce on his 60th Birthday*, eds. W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 277-286, et al.

Rome is the traditional location of imprisonment for the writing of these epistles.⁵⁵ There the Apostle had a rather loose confinement (Acts 28:16,30), a sort of house arrest, which would have allowed letter writing and visits and the preaching of the gospel (4:3f; Eph. 6:19f). Luke and Aristarchus are also known to have been present with Paul in Rome (Acts 27:1f; 28:16; Col. 4:10-14). In both of these regards, however, Rome holds no advantage over Caesarea. Bruce has suggested in support of Rome that the theology of the epistle comes from the late, mature Paul, reflecting his last years.⁵⁶ This would provide a date of composition of 63 AD.

Paul is confident in his capacity to write authoritatively to the Colossians as he identifies himself as an apostle of Christ by God's will (1:1) who has become a minister of the gospel (1:23) and whose present suffering is a continuation of the ministry of Christ on behalf of his audience (1:24). He states that God has given him the task to proclaim his word—the mystery of Christ—in full to his audience (1:25). This ministry involves proclaiming Christ, warning, and instructing everyone in all wisdom with the goal to present everyone perfect in Christ (1:28). This has become a consuming objective to which he has given all his energies (1:29) and which has for some time been motivating him to struggle on behalf of his audience (2:1). Epaphras is portrayed as sharing in Paul's concerns, prayers, and hard work (1:7; 4:12f).

⁵⁵In support of the Roman hypothesis see Abbott, T.K. *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897), xxix-xxxi, and O'Brian, *Colossians*, 1-li.

⁵⁶Bruce, F.F. *Paul, Apostle of the Free Spirit* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), 411f.

II.D.2.The Audience

The audience to whom Paul wrote Colossians is a rhetorical audience. They are the ones to whom the message of the letter is directed, they are the ones in whom the Apostle wishes to accomplish the purposes of his letter—to educate and warn them and guide them into full Christian life and practice. They are people who are capable of being influenced by his letter and they have the ability of transforming the situation by their responses to the letter.

The epistle is addressed to the Christian community at Colossae. The church at Laodicea are also mentioned as secondary recipients (4:16) of this epistle and apparently primary recipients of another letter. Other potential recipients of the Colossian letter include the congregation at Hierapolis (4:13) and the congregation which meets in Nympha's house (4:15). The church mentioned in Philemon 2 as meeting at Philemon's house may also have been assumed as recipients of the letter, and the Apostle may even have intended that the letter be circulated among the churches throughout Asia, though this is not explicitly stated.

Colossae is located in Phrygia, straddling the Lycus river, on the main road from Ephesus and Sardis to eastern Asia Minor and the Fertile Crescent. Its site is presently uninhabited and has yet to be excavated. It had been a great city under the Persians but had declined in importance by Roman times, being surpassed in prosperity and power by its close neighbors, Laodicea (c. 10 miles W)⁵⁷ and

⁵⁷This is the same Laodicea addressed in Revelation 3:14.

Hierapolis (c. 12 miles NW).⁵⁸ Under the Romans all three cities were brought into the proconsular province of Asia, the two greatest cities of which were Ephesus and Laodicea. The Romans made Laodicea the seat of a *conventus* (διοίκησις)—a judicial district—of at least 25 towns (including Colossae and Hierapolis).

In addition to the ethnic Phrygians and Greeks who lived there, there existed a strong Jewish minority in both Phrygia and Lydia since the second century BC when Antiochus III transplanted 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon and Mesopotamia into these areas.⁵⁹ However it seems likely from the contents of the letter itself that the congregation in Colossae consisted predominantly of Gentile converts.⁶⁰ Surprisingly there are no quotations from the OT in the entire epistle. The vices spoken against in 3:5-7, in which the writer says they used to walk, are distinctly Gentile vices. The audience is spoken of as having been outsiders and enemies of God (1:12-13,21), spiritually dead in the uncircumcision of their flesh (2:13), who are now reconciled by Christ's death (1:22), transferred to the Kingdom of the Son (1:13), redeemed, forgiven (1:14; 2:13; 3:13), and no longer subject to cosmic powers (2:13-15). All of these factors point to a predominantly Gentile

⁵⁸See Strabo, *Geography* 12,8,16; Pliny, *NatHist* 5,29 and 105; Cicero, as Proconsul of Cilicia, held his court in Laodicea, *AdAtt* 6,2. For further background material see Barth, M. and Blanke, H. *Colossians* (London: Doubleday, 1994), trans. A.B. Beck; Lightfoot, J.B. *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (London: Macmillan, 1890); subsequently Lightfoot, *Colossians*; Murphy-O'Connor, J. *Paul, A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), esp. 231-251.

⁵⁹Josephus, *Ant* 12,3,4; see also Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 28; and Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 19ff, who estimates that by 62 BC there must have been a Jewish adult male population of at least 11,000 in the district of Laodicea.

⁶⁰See Bradley, J. "The Religious Life-Setting of the Epistle to the Colossians" *StBibT* 2 (1972), 17-36; and Moule, C.F.D. *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 29.

audience. In addition, Paul's ministry of proclaiming the mystery of Christ to the Gentiles is referred to in 1:27.

As already noted, it seems certain that Paul had not personally established the church at Colossae (2:1) and so probably had few or no personal contacts there although he certainly knew Philemon personally and probably was instrumental in his conversion (Philemon 19). The church was rather most probably founded by Epaphras (1:7f; 4:12f) who was himself apparently from the city (4:12). He may have come to faith in Christ under the ministry of Paul when he was preaching and teaching in Ephesus for three years "...so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10; cf. 20:31).

Within the congregation at Colossae certain groups and individuals are singled out and specially addressed. The apostle has instruction in particular for wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters in the domestic codes section of 3:18-4:1. Archippus is told to carry out the ministry entrusted to him (4:17). The church at Laodicea is greeted as are Nympha and the church which meets at her/his house (4:15).

The recipients are described as holy and faithful brothers (1:2) who had previously received the gospel (1:6) and were showing signs of its work in their lives, such as love for their fellow Christians (1:4) and hope in the gospel. The writer rejoices in their good order and stability in Christ (2:5). They are called chosen, holy, loved (3:12).

II.D.3. The Speech or Subject

In spite of the ubiquitous praise which Paul heaps upon his audience, it does seem that he believed their situation could be improved still further. He mentions in 1:9 how he and his co-workers have not stopped giving thanks and praying for the Colossians since they heard Epaphras' report about them. They prayed that the audience receive full knowledge of God's will so that their lives might be entirely pleasing to God. Probably since the Colossian congregation had not been long in the Lord, they still were in need of further instruction and encouragement to secure their future growth and continuance with Christ. Their present lack of full understanding constituted a potential threat to their proper Christian conduct (1:10; 3:1-4:6) and could even facilitate their drifting away from the true gospel which alone provides redemption (1:22-23) by leaving them vulnerable to deceptive philosophy (2:8) or to misguided legalistic, Judaizing, ascetic, or mystical teachings (2:11-23), or which could prevent them from living a full Christian life of love, unity, thankfulness (3:14-17), prayer (4:2-4), and effective witness to those outside the Church (4:5-6). In fact, the audience may already have begun to give in to some of these threats (2:20), though this is not certain and seems unlikely from the generally positive tone of the epistle and the praise given the audience in the *exordium* (although it must be admitted that in the *exordium* it was recommended that the rhetor gain the good-will of his audience, even if by flattery).

Paul declares that God's goal is to present the Colossians perfect before himself (1:22), but he warns that they must continue in faith and hope for this to be

fulfilled (1:23). He tells how it is his ministry to proclaim Christ, warning everyone, and instructing everyone in all wisdom so as to present all perfect in Christ (1:28). Paul stresses that he is strenuously laboring for his audience (2:1) that their hearts may be comforted, that they may have unity in love, and that they may gain full understanding of God's mystery, Christ (2:2), in whom all God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (2:3). It is God's will that this mystery be revealed to his people (1:27). In addition to this epistle he is sending Tychicus to encourage their hearts (4:8).

In order to avoid the potential pitfalls he has mentioned and to accomplish his multifaceted goal, the author writes with a powerful prophylactic of instruction in Christian doctrine and conduct. He tells them of God's intent in his work in the universe through Christ and their involvement in this grand scheme (1:12-23), as well as his own involvement as a minister of this message (1:23-2:5). He warns them to be on their guard against empty reasoning, human traditions, and philosophy which try to persuade them of a need for something more than what they already have in Christ. He charges them to continue to hold Christ as their Lord, as they received him (2:6). He reminds them of what God accomplished in them through their baptism and rebirth (2:11ff). He enumerates pagan vices and Christian virtues and calls them to focus their minds on heavenly things so as to live appropriately (3:1-17). He sets out domestic codes of conduct (3:18-4:2) and instructions for interaction with non-christians (4:5f).

Paul is concerned about the potential threat of this situation (e.g. 1:24ff), but

also appears confident that his audience has the ability to modify it (as evidenced by the numerous imperatives) and that they will in fact respond to his discourse (there is assumption throughout that the audience is well-disposed to Paul and will beyond all doubt respond to his exhortation). In conjunction with this letter, he may also be relying upon Tychicus to ensure that all is set in good order (4:8).

II.E. THE EXIGENCE OF COLOSSIANS

Having summarized the general situation visible in the text of Colossians, a theoretical reconstruction of particular points in this situation which motivated Paul to pen Colossians (the main exigence or exigences) will now be undertaken.

II.E.1. Proposing an Exigence

Amongst commentators who hold to the Pauline authorship of the epistle it is commonly advocated that the Apostle and his entourage wrote to the church in Colossae after having received a first-hand report of the conditions there from Epaphras who, distressed by the appearance of heresy in his congregation and unable to combat it effectively, had sought out Paul in his imprisonment for advice and encouragement, and in so coming to him for assistance was himself likewise imprisoned. Thus the need arose to write to the congregation in Colossae to root out this rising heresy.⁶¹

⁶¹E.g. Bruce, F.F. and Simpson, E.K. *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 165; Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 32; Martin, *Colossians*, 7; O'Brien, *Colossians*, xxx.

Such a situational reconstruction compels commentators to place heavy emphasis upon the importance of the threat of heresy as the cause for writing the letter and has led to numerous conflicting attempts to identify "the heresy".⁶² These conflicting identifications of the heresy reflect the epistle's vague, general descriptions. The heresy is never specifically defined. No individuals leading or participating in such a movement within the congregation are named or rebuked.

⁶²The impossibility of identifying "the heresy" is amply seen in J.J. Gunther's listing of 44 different suggestions advanced by scholars in his *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background. A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings* (NovTSup 35; Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1973), 3f. The controversy has continued in subsequent research. Sappington, T.J. *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1991), proposes that the opponents described in the letter were adherents of ascetic-mystical Jewish piety and apocalyptic. House, H.W. "Doctrinal Issues in Colossians. Part 1: Heresies in the Colossian Church," *BSac* 149 (1992), 45-59, acknowledges that no single identification of the heresy (e.g. as Merkabah mysticism, Greek mystery cult, Christian gnosticism) provides a satisfactory explanation and concludes that the most one can say is that the error was a mix of Jewish, Gentile, and Christian elements which diminished the all sufficiency of Christ's person and salvific ministry. Sumney, J.L. "Those Who 'Pass Judgement': The Identity of the Opponents in Colossians," *Bib* 74 (1993), 366-388, suggests that the letter opposes ascetic visionaries who are condemned for their condemnation of those who do not follow their strict regulations and perhaps also of those who have not experienced visions. Aune, N.Å. "Tro på magi og onde makter—en nøkkel til forståelsen av heresiproblemet i Kolossae?" *TTK* 65 (1994), 97-105, attempts to establish that the background for the Colossian heresy may have been the folk religion world of magic and the important role played by demons in that world. DeMaris, R.E. *The Colossian Controversy. Wisdom in Dispute at Colossae* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1994), suggests that the Colossian philosophy consisted of a blend of popular middle Platonic, Jewish, and Christian elements concerned with the pursuit of wisdom. He concludes that these philosophers were attracted to Christianity since it proclaimed a savior who restored peace to the unstable cosmos so that they could rely on the *στοιχεῖα* to guide them. Dunn, J.D.G. "The Colossian Philosophy: A Confident Jewish Apologia," *Bib* 76 (1995), 153-181, believes that the proponents of the Colossian philosophy were Colossian Jews who denigrated the Colossian Christians' claim to participate in Israel's heritage. Goulder, M.D. "Colossians and Barbelo," *NTS* 41 (1995), 601-619, proposes that Colossians was Paul's response to developing gnostic influences from Jewish Christianity upon the Pauline church at Colossae. In another article, "The Visionaries of Laodicea," *JSNT* 43 (1991), 15-39, Goulder suggests similarly that Ephesians was written by Paul to the church at Laodicea to contest the claims of Jewish-Christian visionaries there. Martin, T.W. *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit. Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996), suggests that the letter was a response to Cynic philosophy and he identifies the opponents as Cynics.

These many conflicting proposals have led I.H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995), 181, (subsequently Thomson, *Chiasmus*) to state: "The fact that so many backgrounds are suggested may actually reinforce the line taken throughout this chapter that Paul simply lists, in his own terminology, some of the many prohibitions and practices that he knows to have been a danger to newer Christians."

The percentage of the letter concerned with the "heresy" is actually less than that concerned with exhortation.⁶³ In fact, the non-specific, generalizing tone of the entire epistle has been interpreted by some critics as evidence against Pauline authorship, with traditional formulations indicating a move into early catholicism and with "the heresy" being a form of early gnosticism or merely functioning as a pseudepigraphal device.⁶⁴

A re-examination of the primary sources, however, can lead to a different reconstruction of the exigence behind the writing of Colossians which is in harmony with the non-specific tone of the epistle and the evidence of the primary sources themselves.

Paul's ministry at Ephesus lasted more than two years, during which time the message of the Gospel was heard throughout Asia (Acts 19:10). Epaphras probably at this time came to Ephesus (which was the largest, most important city in all of Asia and its cultural center, lying about 120 miles West of Colossae) where he heard the Gospel and came to faith in Christ. No doubt he studied there under Paul who was teaching daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. Epaphras later returned to Colossae (perhaps under the direction of Paul) where he preached the Gospel and established a church (Colossians 1:7).

⁶³See Hooker, M.D. "Were There False Teachers in Colossae?" in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, eds. B. Lindars and S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 315-331; subsequently Hooker, "False Teachers". Furnish, V.P. "Epistle to the Colossians," *ABD* (1992), vol.1, 1090-1096, likewise believes that Colossians should be regarded as a letter of exhortation and encouragement rather than as polemic against a supposed heresy.

⁶⁴For example see Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy," 166f; Lohse, *Colossians*, 68 and 89ff; Marxsen, *Introduction*, 177-186.

It was also while at Ephesus that Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, advising them about the collection for God's people and his own future plans (1 Cor. 16:1-9):

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

Although at the writing of this passage Paul was uncertain whether he would accompany the churches' representatives to Jerusalem, Luke tells us that not long afterwards he determined to join them on their journey (Acts 19:21). The riot incited by Demetrius the silversmith (in which Aristarchus and Gaius were seized; Acts 19:29) forced Paul to cut short his ministry in Ephesus and proceed first to Macedonia and then to Greece where he stayed three months (Acts 20:1ff). He, along with his travelling companions and presumably the representatives of the churches with their collections, had intended to sail from there to Syria, but because of a plot against him he decided to go back through Macedonia and Asia (Acts 20:3). Acts 20:4 tells us:

He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius

from Derbe, Timothy also, and from the province of Asia
Tychicus and Trophimus.

It is plausible that these same men as well as other unnamed church representatives (including Epaphras of Colossae) continued with Paul and Luke to Jerusalem.

At his arrest in Jerusalem Paul was accused by some Jews from the province of Asia of bringing Greeks into the temple (Acts 21:29):

For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with
him in the city, and supposed that Paul had brought him
into the temple.

Nowhere in Acts is it stated that any of Paul's companions were arrested along with him. However we do discover in Acts 27:1f that Paul was accompanied by other prisoners as well as by Aristarchus the Macedonian and Luke on the voyage to Rome. We find Aristarchus mentioned as "my fellow prisoner" in Colossians 4:10 and the same expression used of Epaphras in Philemon 23. From this it may be conjectured that some of Paul's travelling companions were in fact arrested with him (or voluntarily went into imprisonment with him)—in particular Aristarchus and Epaphras—and others (perhaps such as Luke and Tychicus) freely accompanied him to Caesarea and Rome.

The following chart compares the individuals listed in the four books:

ACTS	COLOSSIANS	PHILEMON	EPHESIANS
1 Sopater			
2 Aristarchus	Aristarchus	Aristarchus	
3 Secundus			
4 Gaius (Derbe)			
5 Timothy	Timothy	Timothy	
6 Tychicus	Tychicus		Tychicus
7 Trophimus			
8 (Luke) ⁶⁵	Luke	Luke	
9	Onesimus	Onesimus	
10	Epaphras	Epaphras	
11	Mark	Mark	
12	Demas	Demas	
13	Justus		
14 Erastus			
15 Gaius (Macedonia)			

Following this reconstruction, it is unlikely that Epaphras had only recently come to visit Paul or that he had come to seek advice about "the heresy" in Colossae, and then found himself also thrown into prison. If that had been the case, Paul certainly would be expected to have made mention of an event of such personal interest to his readers; yet Colossians and Philemon are completely silent about a visit and capture. Additionally, Colossians does not address any purpose connected to or dependent specifically upon a visit from Epaphras. The epistle lacks a sense of urgency.

If Paul were relying upon any recent report of conditions in the church, it more likely would have come from Philemon's run-away slave, Onesimus, who was

⁶⁵This assumes that Luke was present when the pronoun "we" occurs.

from Colossae (Col. 4:9) and had come to Paul in his imprisonment (Philemon 10-16). Though even his information could not be called fresh since considerable time must be assumed to have passed since he had found his way to Paul, come in contact with the Apostle, been converted to Christianity, and agreed to return to his master.

Thus the theory that Paul wrote Colossians on account of a recent report brought by Epaphras about a rising threat of heresy should be reconsidered. It seems unlikely that this was the reason for writing the letter; another reason and purpose must exist.

It may be conjectured that the occasion was Paul's sending Onesimus back to Philemon in the company of Tychicus, a native of Asia.⁶⁶ Philemon, it may be assumed from Paul's calling Onesimus "one of you [Colossians]" (Col. 4:9), lived in or near Colossae. This is also supported by the mention of Archippus in both letters (Col. 4:17; Phlm 2). As he was sending Onesimus, Tychicus, and a letter to Philemon, and as the founder and representative of the Colossian church was imprisoned with him, it would have been only natural to send a letter of

⁶⁶Glaze, R.E. "Onesimus: Runaway or Emissary?" *TheolEduc* 54 (1996), 3-11, contends that Onesimus, rather than being a runaway slave, was sent by Philemon to minister to Paul. Winter, S.C. "Paul's Letter to Philemon," *NTS* 33 (1987), 1-15, suggests similarly that Onesimus was not a runaway slave, but had been sent by Philemon's congregation to assist Paul. See likewise Winter's "Methodological Observations on a New Interpretation of Paul's Letter to Philemon," *USQR* 39 (1984), 203-212. Even if this hypothesis could be shown to be true the general situation would remain unaltered: Paul is returning Onesimus to his master. Winter's arguments are opposed by J.G. Nordling, "Onesimus Fugitivus: A Defense of the Runaway Slave Hypothesis in Philemon," *JSNT* 41 (1991), 97-119.

Callahan, A.D. "Paul's Epistle to Philemon: Towards an Alternative *Argumentum*," *HTR* 86 (1993), 357-376, points out that there is little internal evidence that Philemon was written as a re-introductory letter for Onesimus as a runaway slave, the "slave interpretation" having first appeared in J. Chrysostom. Callahan proposes that the real situation is not that Onesimus was a slave (he was rather free), but that he was Philemon's *real* brother, but was unloved by him.

encouragement and instruction to this young congregation. Such a reconstruction allows for the thoroughly positive tone of the letter and its rather general, but non-urgent content. Tychicus would use the opportunity to report on Paul and Epaphras' current situation and their hoped for release, as well as to encourage and confirm the church at Colossae (and perhaps others in the province) in their faith.⁶⁷

Although the urgent threat of a heresy was not the reason for Paul's writing, it must not be overlooked that Paul was concerned for the spiritual well-being of the Colossians. He was anxious that they be confirmed in their Christian belief and practice and that they not be drawn away by the pagan practices and beliefs which daily surrounded them on every side.

II.E.2. A Proposed Exigence

In summary then, the exigence appears to arise from a chance opportunity resulting from the more pressing exigence of returning a runaway slave to his master. The situation in Colossae itself was one of a relatively young and inexperienced church which had proven itself with a good start but which needed to go on to fuller understanding of God and his will and action in the cosmos and the practical implications this should have in the lives of the members of the congregation. There were potential difficulties and dangers at Colossae but these were not perceived as such a threat to the life of the community as the problems

⁶⁷The simple value of letter writing as a means of maintaining and strengthening social relationships (the *Verbindungsbrief*) should not be discounted. Cf. Alexander, L. "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians," *JSNT* 37 (1989), 87-101.

addressed in other NT epistles such as Galatians—where already in the sixth verse the Apostle's words of dismay and shock proclaim the urgent danger faced—or 1 Corinthians—where once again immediately following the salutation and thanksgiving Paul in 1:10 instantly and directly attacks their disunity, the first in a series of emergencies confronting that church. Unlike the situations present in the Corinthian and Galatian churches, the dangers at Colossae appear not yet to have taken hold of the community (at least not of most in the community); rather they only stand as a potential threat. It is not so much that Paul is trying to win them back from an error into which they have strayed, as that he is seeking to ground and bolster the Christian faith in which they presently—though immaturely—stand.

Paul and his companions are pleased with the progress to date made by the Colossian believers (e.g. 1:4ff), but they are also worried about certain weaknesses in the congregation and about certain potential threats from without which could at some point seriously disrupt the infant church. As noted, these threats center around a deficiency in the believers' knowledge of God's will (1:9): what he *has done* in Christ (esp. 1:15-22 and 2:9-15) and *is doing* in the world and particularly in the Colossian fellowship itself through the instrument of the gospel (e.g. 1:5ff), and what he *will do* in the future (e.g. 1:5, 12; 3:4). This he calls "the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints" (1:25-26) and which is intricately intertwined with and embodied in the essential being, accomplishments, and position of Christ (1:27; 2:2). The problems which such a deficiency in knowledge could lead to involve

straying into doctrinal error and ignorance as to how to live and conduct a fitting Christian life before God. Paul believed that this situation could be changed for the better by a letter (as well as through prayer and the personal contact of his agents, see 1:9-12 and 4:7-8). Thus a rhetorical exigence existed and Colossians was written.

II.F. THE RHETORICAL CONSTRAINTS

Rhetorical constraints "have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence."⁶⁸ These constraints derive again from persons, events, objects, relations, times, and places. Common constraints include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives. They may also derive from the rhetor himself: his personal character (*ethos*), ability to formulate logical proofs, and style. In general, constraints may be classified according to Aristotle's two categories of proofs: inartistic (or inartificial) proofs and artistic (or artificial) proofs.⁶⁹ Inartificial proofs or constraints are those which exist independently of the orator in the situation itself; "...all those which have not been furnished by ourselves but were already in existence."⁷⁰ Aristotle lists five inartificial proofs: laws (*νόμοι*), witnesses (*μάρτυρες*), contracts (*συνθήκαι*), torture (*βάσανοι*), and oaths (*ὅρκοι*). Under witnesses he includes such evidence as

⁶⁸Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation", 8.

⁶⁹Ibid., 8.

⁷⁰*ArRhet* 1,2,2; ...ὅσα μὴ δι' ἡμῶν πεπóρισται ἀλλὰ προὔπηρχεν ...

proverbs, oracles, precedents, and the writings of the poets.⁷¹ Artificial proofs or constraints are those created by the rhetor and his method; "all that can be constructed by system and by our own efforts."⁷² Inartificial proofs are available at hand to be made use of, artificial proofs must be invented.

There are many rhetorical constraints present in Colossians intended to move the audience to decision and action so that the exigence may be modified. Great weight is placed upon the *ethos* of the Apostle Paul, upon his authority and the sources of that authority—Jesus Christ and the gospel. Paul declares himself "an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (1:1). He does not speak on his own authority or the authority of any man. He is ordained by God and apparently he presumes his audience accept this since he spends no time defending this statement. He shows himself as one concerned for his audience's well-being (we pray for you, 1:3,9) and as one favorably disposed towards them (we thank God because of what we have heard about you, 1:3ff). His suffering proves that he is not concerned with personal gain so much as with their best interests (1:24ff). That his personal authority carries weight with his audience is also visible in the closing greetings in his testimony on behalf of his co-workers, especially Epaphras (4:13), and in his personal signature (4:18).

Tradition also acts as a rhetorical constraint. This tradition is "the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you" (1:5-6), "God's grace in all its truth"

⁷¹*ArRhet* 1,15

⁷²*ArRhet* 1,2,2; ...ἐντεχνα δὲ ὅσα διὰ τῆς μεθόδου καὶ δι' ἡμῶν κατασκευασθῆναι δυνατόν.

(1:6), the gospel "proclaimed to every creature under heaven" (1:23), the mystery of God (1:26). His appeal is that his audience remain true to the tradition, to continue firm in it: 2:6,7 (as you received Christ, continue to live in him as you were taught); 2:10-13 (appeal is made to their spiritual circumcision and baptism); 2:20, 3:1 (appeal is made to their participation in Christ's death and resurrection—presumably in baptism). There is also the appeal to what is fitting and right in the Lord (1:10; 2:5; 3:12,18,20). There is an appeal to the authority of the person of Christ and the wisdom of God (again part of the tradition), especially in 1:15-20 and 2:9-15.

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the letter is an appeal ever made to any OT scripture or saying of Christ.

Thus the constraints employed by the rhetor tend to gather around the following heads: the authority of the Apostle, the authority of the tradition (which also includes appeals to the wisdom of God, the authority and mighty deeds of Christ, and the personal experience of the audience), and the appeal to what is proper and fitting (*proprietas*).

Occasionally Paul uses conditional statements, expressions of surprise, warnings, and commands to further constrain his audience: 1:22-23 (he has reconciled you to present you holy—if you continue in your faith...); 2:20 (since you died to the basic principles of this world, why do you submit to it?!); 2:4 (I tell you this so that no one may deceive you...); 3:8 (but now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these...).

The author is confident that all of these elements and more will put strong pressure on the audience to decide and act in the manner he proposes for remedying the exigence.

II.G. THE RHETORICAL PROBLEMS

There does not appear to be a serious rhetorical problem in Colossians. Kennedy has suggested that a rhetorical problem will make itself visible in the *exordium* by the use of an *insinuatio*.⁷³ However, Colossians does not use an *insinuatio* but rather a *principium* as its introduction (1:3-8) as will be made clear in Chapter Four.

This is not to say that the Apostle did not face a number of difficulties in writing to the Colossians. It has been already noted that he had not founded the church at Colossae (1:4-8) and in fact had never been to Colossae (2:1). He lacked first-hand information on the situation there, although Epaphras and Onesimus could provide many details. In addition, he and the founder of the Colossian church were now in prison (4:10; Philemon 23) and unable to go personally to deal with the situation. All of these factors could have damaged the strength of his ethical appeal, but there is little evidence to suggest that this had in fact happened. Throughout the epistle he assumes that his readers will accept and respect his apostolic authority. The message which he has to teach them is described as a mystery (1:26), but he does not express any doubt in the Colossians' ability to understand it and does not

⁷³Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 36.

spend time on preliminary explanations of it.

Of the problems confronting Paul in writing to the Colossians, none should be considered severe (as defined by Kennedy) since at no point did the author feel himself constrained to deal with any preliminary problem but begins with a *principium* followed immediately by his *propositio* and the body of his oration.

CHAPTER THREE: THE *STASIS* AND *GENUS* OF COLOSSIANS

And let the pupil first discern the nature of a case, never an obscure thing, whether the question relate to the doing of an act, or to its character or right designation: this once ascertained, the substance of the case, or that without which the discussion must collapse, leaps instantly to the mind...¹

The third step in Kennedy's method of rhetorical criticism is the identification of the rhetorical unit's *stasis* and *genus*.² This will also entail discussing the basic question (*quaestio*) behind the document.

The *stasis* and *genus* of a discourse can reveal information about the nature of the rhetorical situation from which that discourse arose. They help to illuminate the rhetorical exigence which the author felt constrained to correct through the creation of discourse. *Stasis* and *genus* inform us of the "mood" and intent of the author. And *stasis*, in particular, can provide insight into the argumentative situation the author faced and addressed.

III.A. *STASIS* THEORY

It is first necessary to describe classical *stasis* theory in greater depth before

¹*DeOr* 2,3,132: *Ac primum naturam causae videat, quae numquam latet, factumne sit quaeratur, an quale sit, an quod nomen habeat; quo perspecto statim occurrit...quid faciat causam, id est, quo sublato controversia stare non possit...* G.M. Foster, in agreement with Cicero, claims that *stasis* is the key to invention; "Development of Rhetorical *Stasis* for Deliberative Speaking," (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1970), 62; subsequently Foster, "Development of *Stasis*".

²"Two other parts of classical theory which are useful in a preliminary approach to the rhetorical unit are *stasis* theory and the theory of the three species of rhetoric" (Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 36).

analyzing the *stasis* of Colossians. *Stasis* theory was not apparently formulated until the Hellenistic era, although Plato seems to have been aware of the basic elements of the concept³ and the early rhetorical manual, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (probably from the 4th century B.C.), describes something like a *stasis* theory.⁴ Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* also discussed its elementary principles.⁵

Stasis theory is a complex and technical issue, and its intricacies were in dispute in classical times.⁶ The individual who is usually considered to have set out the most comprehensive and certainly the most influential theory on *stasis* was the Hellenistic rhetor Hermagoras of Temnos (fl. c. 110 B.C.) in his work *On Stasis*.⁷

III.A.1. *Stasis* Defined

What *Stasis* is and How it Arises⁸

³*Gorg* 453a, 459d, 460e; *Phdr* 261b.

⁴*RhetAlex* 1442b,33-1444a,15.

⁵*ArRhet* 1,13,9ff; 3,17,1ff; cf. *Categor* 2,7.

⁶For example, Aristotle listed ten issues upon which a question may turn (*Categor* 2,7), while Quintilian noted that some other rhetors accepted only one form of *stasis*, the *conjectural* (*InstOr* 3,6,29); see also Heath, M. "The Substructure of *Stasis*-Theory from Hermagoras to Hermogenes" *CQ* 44 (1994), 1-16.

⁷Unfortunately Hermagoras' work has not survived, but his theory can be substantially reconstructed from some sixty quotations found in secondary Greek and Latin sources. See Piderit, C.W. *Commentatio de Hermagore rhetore* (Hersfeld, 1839) and Thiele, G. *Hermagoras* (Strassburg, 1893). Quintilian (*InstOr* 3,6,3) notes that the Greeks attributed the invention of the concept of *stasis* to others, but acknowledges Hermagoras for his addition of *μετάληψις* (objection) as a species of *stasis* (*InstOr* 3,6,60). For a discussion and outline of the reconstructed *stasis* theory of Hermagoras see Nadeau, R.E. "Classical Systems of Stases in Greek: Hermagoras to Hermogenes" *GRBS* 2 (1959), 51-71; subsequently Nadeau, "Systems of *Stasis*".

⁸Helpful reviews of *stasis* theory may be found in Kennedy, G.A. *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 73-86; Calboli Montefusco, L. *La dottrina degli status nella retorica greca e romana* (Hildesheim, 1986); Russell, D.A. *Greek*

The word *stasis* (στάσις, *status*, *constitutio*) is derived from the same Indo-European root and contains the same meaning as our own English word "stand". In rhetoric *stasis* is a standing, a stopping, or a hesitation in discourse.⁹ Speaking most generally, a *stasis* occurs whenever a difficulty (ζήτημα, πρόβλημα, *quaestio*, *controversia*)¹⁰ arises in a situation, resulting in a stopping or standing on that point. It is a point of dispute, contention, ambiguity, or doubt (*dubium*) in the process of human existence or interaction which can find adequate verbal expression in a question (ζήτημα, *quaestio*).¹¹ *Stasis* is not so much the question itself as the kind of question (*genus quaestionis*) which is at issue in a case.

Rhetoricians divided all questions into two categories:¹² definite (or special: ὑπόθεσις, *quaestio finita*) and indefinite (or general, though sometimes called philosophical: θέσις, *quaestio infinita*). Definite questions deal with specific facts, persons, places, times, etc., while indefinite questions deal with speculative or abstract knowledge and action.¹³ By their nature indefinite questions precede definite questions. That is, all definite questions ultimately refer back to some

Declamation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 40-73; see also Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 64-85; Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 28-52; and *InstOr*, 3,6,63-82.

⁹The essential rhetorical meaning of *stasis* is well described by O.A.L. Dieter in "Stasis" *SpMono* 17 (1950), 345-369.

¹⁰*InstOr* 3,11,1.

¹¹*InstOr* 3,6,2.

¹²*InstOr* 3,5,5ff; *DeInv* 1,6,8.

¹³To demonstrate the difference between the two, Quintilian provides the following example: "Should a man marry?" is an indefinite question, while "Should Cato marry?" is a definite question (*InstOr* 3,5,8; see also *DeInv* 1,6,8; *DeOr* 1,31,138 and 3,28,109; *Or* 14,46; *Topica* 21,79-81; and *PartOr* 18,62).

indefinite question. Indefinite questions are predominantly the concern of philosophy, not rhetoric. Rhetoric deals rather with "real life" situational questions, and thus naturally is most concerned with definite questions. This is not to say that rhetoric never deals with philosophical questions, but when it does, it does so only as a basis from which an actual situation (a definite question) is addressed.¹⁴

Questions (and thus *causae* and *stases*) may be simple (just one question in dispute; *quaestio simplex*), complex (more than one question in dispute; *quaestio coniuncta*), or comparative (where the superiority of one person or thing is demonstrated by comparing it to one or more others; *quaestio comparativa*).¹⁵

Among the many issues (*quaestiones*) which a case may involve, there will exist a main issue upon which the case will turn. This is the central or key element of dispute, the *stasis* (στάσις, *status*, *constitutio*) of the case.

The real life situational conflicts, which rhetoric addresses in the hope of providing solutions for definite questions, emerge from the dialectical clash of two or more opinions or causes (*causae*) which stand in opposition to one another. *Stasis* arises from the main question (*summa quaestio*), the question resulting from the first conflict of these causes.¹⁶ A discourse's *summa quaestio* takes the place of prominence among all the questions which may be touched upon within that discourse. It is *the* point upon which the audience must give its decision (τὸ

¹⁴Although the essence of most oratory is the definite question, all specific controversies may be related to general ethical and moral questions, and in this way rhetoric deals with both definite and indefinite questions (see *Or* 14,45-46; *DeOr* 2,31,133-134; and *InstOr* 3,5,5-16, esp.13).

¹⁵*InstOr* 3,10,1-3; *DeInv* 1,12,17.

¹⁶*InstOr* 3,6; *Topica* 25,93; *DeInv* 1,8,10.

κρινόμενον). It is *the* question upon which the case stands or falls. It is the key point which the orator considers most important and which he wishes most to impress upon the minds of his audience. It is the central issue around which the entire discourse revolves.¹⁷

III.A.2. Types of *Stases*

The Theory of Hermagoras

Hermagoras identified four types of *stases* and developed a method by which the type of *stasis* issuing from any conflict of causes can be identified by merely asking a few relatively simple questions.

Hermagoras—like most ancient rhetoricians—was concerned foremost with the judicial *genus* of orations. And it might appear from studying his method that *stasis* theory applies only to judicial rhetoric, but this is not so. Quintilian claimed that every cause of whatever *genus* has an essential *stasis* upon which it is founded,¹⁸ although this is most evident in judicial rhetoric where two parties are clearly in conflict over some issue.

The system Hermagoras developed was designed to be practical and simple, yet exhaustive. By asking no more than four questions his students could discover the essential central issue (*stasis*) of any case dealing with a definite question (*causa*). These four questions were meant to be asked in a prescribed order. When

¹⁷*InstOr* 3,6,4-12,21.

¹⁸*InstOr* 3,6,1.

the student reached a question which could not be conclusively answered, that is where the case hesitated or stood—the *stasis*. That is where the essential point of contention between the parties of the case must rest. That is the issue which each orator must try to prove persuasively to the judges to be in conformity with his own image of reality rather than with that of his opponent.

Hermagoras's four questions, in order, are:¹⁹

- 1) Is there an act or offense (a problem) to be considered?

If the questioning must stop on this point, then the *stasis* will be *conjectural* (στοχασμός, *coniectura*) dealing with the question of the existence or non-existence of the problem. In cases like this, the first conflict of causes will manifest itself as follows: 1) accusation—"You did it!" (*Fecisti*), 2) defense—"I did not" (*Non feci*); from which arises 3) the question—"Did he do it?" (*An fecerit*), which is a matter of conjecture and thus a conjectural *stasis*.

But if the existence of the problem is not disputed, then it is asked:

- 2) What is the essence or essential definition of the problem?

If the questioning hesitates on this point a *definitive stasis* (ὁρος, *definitiva*) exists. In a case of this type, the first conflict of causes will run as follows: 1) accusation—"You did it!" (*Fecisti*), 2) defense—"I did, but it is not *what* you say" (*Feci, sed...*); from which arises 3) the question—"What did he do?" (*Quid fecerit?*), which is a dispute over definition and therefore a definitive *stasis*.

¹⁹R.E. Nadeau, "Systems of Stases", 53-54 and also from his introduction to his translation of Hermogenes' "On Stasis" *SpMono* 31 (1964), 374-376; subsequently Nadeau, "On Stasis".

But if there is no dispute about the existence of the problem or its essential nature, then it must be asked:

3) How serious is the act from the standpoint of its non-essential attributes and attendant circumstances?

If disagreement arises over one or more of these matters the *stasis* is *qualitative* (ποιότης, *qualitas*). In such a case, the conflict of causes runs: 1) accusation—"You did it!" (*Fecisti*), 2) defense—"I did, but it is not *as* you say" (*Feci, sed...*); from which arises 3) the question—"How did he do it?" (*Quale fecerit?*), which is a concern of quality and so the *stasis* is qualitative.

These are the three "rational" (λογικόν) *stases*²⁰ which many later rhetoricians recognized as being the only essential *stases*.²¹ Hermagoras, however, added a fourth which turns upon the question of a case's legality:

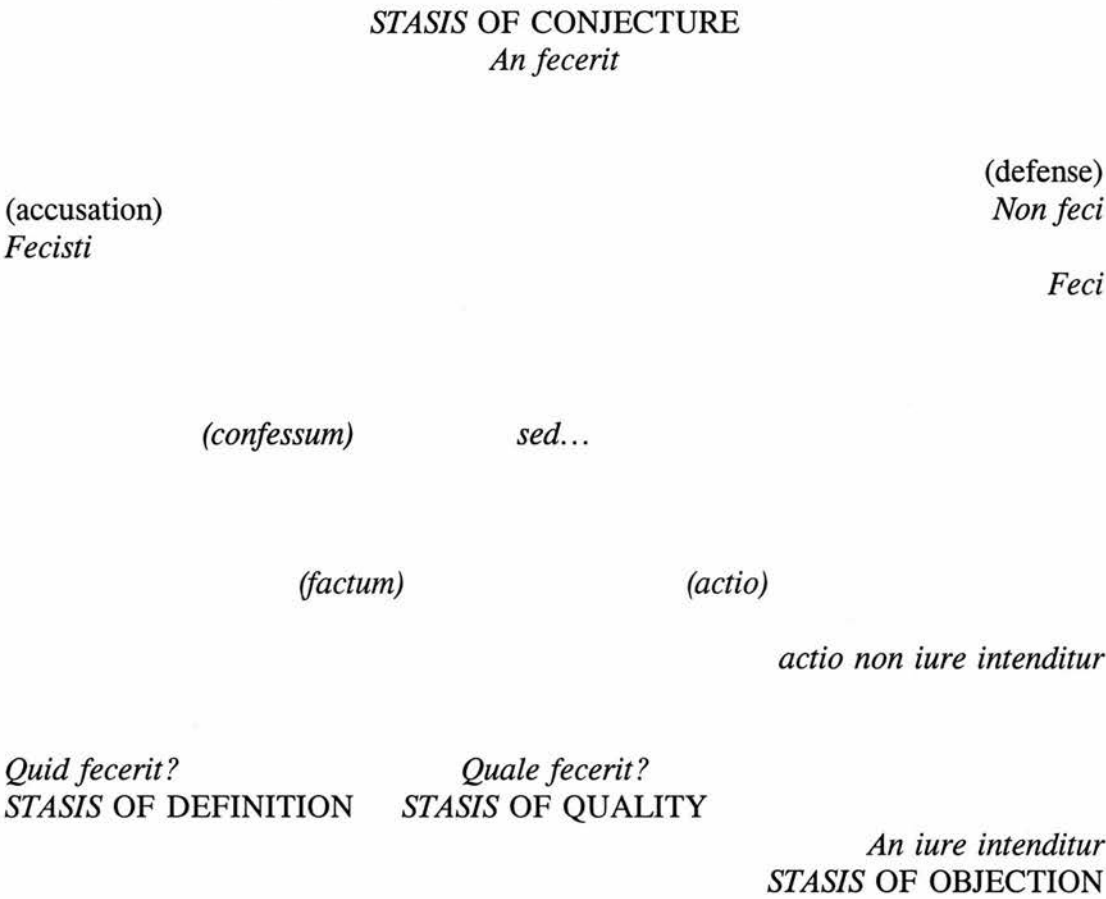
4) Is it appropriate that formal procedural action be undertaken?

Such a question gives rise to a "legal" (νομικόν) *stasis*, one of objection (μετάληψις, *translatio*). In a legal case, the conflict of causes is as follows: 1) accusation—"You did it!" (*Fecisti*), 2) defense—"I did (or did not), but the action has not been brought legally" (*Feci [vel non feci], sed actio non iure intenditur*); from which arises 3) the question—"Has the action been brought against the defendant in accordance with the law?" (*An actio iure intendatur*), which because it entails an objection on procedural grounds is a *stasis* of objection.

²⁰*InstOr* 3,5,4ff; *DeInv* 1,12,17.

²¹E.g. *AdHer* 1,10,18; *DeOr* 2,26,113; *Or* 4,14; *Topica* 21-22; *PartOr* 29-39; *InstOr* 3,6,66-67.

The following is a diagram of Hermagoras' model:



Hermagoras's *stasis* theory was more developed and extensive than these four major types of *stases*.²² He is known to have subdivided these headings and to have identified four legal questions and four ἀσίστατα, or questions which

²²Hermagoras's categories of *stases* may have ultimately been derived from Aristotelian and Stoic concepts and terminology used in discerning types of matter (cf. Aristotle, *Topics* 101; Nadeau, "On Stasis", 370 and his "Some Aristotelian and Stoic Influences on the Theory of Stases" *SpMono* 26 (1959), 248-254).

cannot sustain a *stasis*.²³

In Quintilian we find a simplified version of Hermagoras' model which is suited to all forms of rhetoric and which absorbs all legal *stases* into the three rational *stases*.²⁴ The following is a diagram of Quintilian's model:²⁵

STASIS OF CONJECTURE

An sit

(accusation)
Fecisti

(defense)
Non feci

Feci, sed...

Quid sit?
STASIS OF DEFINITION

Quale sit?
STASIS OF QUALITY

²³These are 1) deficient (of evidence), 2) balanced (to such a degree that no resolution is possible, 3) one-sided (to such a degree that no contest is possible), and 4) inconclusive (a question too difficult to solve); Nadeau, "On Stasis", 378.

²⁴What follows is based on *InstOr* 3,6,80ff; cf. *Or* 15; *DeOr* 2,24,26. More complex divisions of *stasis* may be found in *AdHer* 1,11,13ff and *DeInv* 1,8,10ff. Quintilian, following Cicero (*Or* 14,45), rightly objected to classifying such legal questions as complete and distinct *stases* since he contended that all such legal questions actually deal with questions of conjecture, definition, or quality (*InstOr* 3,6,80 and 88-89).

²⁵As an example of Quintilian's model Cicero's defense of Milo may be used:

1. *an sit?* —Did Milo kill Clodius? —Yes, he admits this fact; the question may proceed, therefore the *stasis* of this case is not conjectural.

2. *quid sit?* —Did Milo murder Clodius? —No, it is not disputed that Clodius ambushed Milo and Milo killed him in self-defense; the question may proceed, therefore the *stasis* is not definitive.

3. *quale sit?* —Did Milo do what was right by killing Clodius? —This point is disputed, therefore the *stasis* is one of quality. (Cicero argued successfully that Milo had done right in killing Clodius, since in so doing he benefitted the republic by ridding it of a bad citizen!).

Hermagoras's method (in its various forms)²⁶ proved to be extremely influential not only in the classical world but even into medieval and renaissance times, primarily because of its wide-spread presence (in modified forms) in other rhetorical writers such as Cicero, Quintilian, and Hermogenes.²⁷ In fact, all *stasis* theory in the Latin rhetors is said to follow the Hermagorean model.²⁸

III.A.3. The *Stasis* of Colossians

Let us begin our examination of the *stasis* of Colossians by looking at what other authors have said regarding this point. Non-rhetorical commentators have suggested a number of possible central themes including the primacy and unique role of Christ, the revelation of the mystery of the nature of Christ, the initiation of the congregation into deeper knowledge, the Christian's freedom from Jewish or other regulations, and the promotion and protection of the order, unity, and peace of the church. All of these issues usually are directly tied to the greater issue of the threat of the "heresy".

Among rhetorical commentators, Melanchthon, as noted earlier, specifically identified a *status* in the text:²⁹

²⁶Although there was not agreement over the exact number or names of the types of *stases*, what the diverse classifications described remained the same (*InstOr* 3,6,22).

²⁷Cicero retained the complete four point theory in his early and influential *DeInv* 1,8,17.

²⁸Nadeau, "On Stasis", 379.

²⁹Melanchthon defined *status* as "the principal question, or proposition, which contains the sum of the matter. All arguments are to be referred to it, as to the principal *conclusio*," *Ph. Mel. Elementorum rhetorices libri duo* in *Corpus Reformatorum: Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. C.G. Bretschneider and H.E. Bindseil (Halle, 1834), 429.

Here therefore is the argument and *status* of this letter—the nature of the Gospel. The apostles offered to the world what one might call a new teaching, which he here defines. His definition is not brief. On the contrary, he fully distinguishes between Christian righteousness and the human righteousness that is gathered by our industry and by our strength, whether from the commands of men or from the Mosaic law (that is, the Decalogue).

Lastly, he passes on some moral precepts. For it was the apostle's custom to begin by teaching the Gospel and justification, and then to set out moral precepts. The world prescribes moral precepts, and decides that that man is righteous who performs and keeps them outwardly. Paul, on the other hand, teaches that justification does not become ours because of our good deeds. It comes through faith, if we believe that our sins are freely forgiven for Christ's sake.³⁰

As noted in the previous chapter, Hatfield identified the exigence of Colossians as the "Colossian Heresy".³¹ He does not, however, give a clear statement of what he believes the epistle's *stasis* to be. It seems obvious, though, that for Hatfield the main issue is the heresy, which threatens the church both with regard to doctrine as well as with regard to Christian conduct.

Aletti never mentions the terms *status* or *stasis*, although he does talk of a principal or dominant theme. He states that the principal theme must be distinguished from that which occasioned the letter.³² He next states that this

³⁰Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 29.

³¹Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 157ff.

³²"Il importe de bien distinguer entre le thème premier ou dominant de la lettre et ce qui l'a occasionnée...Le thème dominant n'est jamais identique aux difficultés ou aux événements qui ont provoqué la lettre," Aletti, *Colossiens*, 42. I understand him to mean by this that one must distinguish between the *stasis* and the exigence.

principal theme can be found in the main *propositio* or *partitio*.³³ In what Aletti sees as the *partitio* (1:21-23) he identifies three themes: 1) the sanctification of believers, 2) faithfulness to the gospel received, and 3) Paul's struggle in proclaiming the *mysterion*.³⁴ However, elsewhere he claims that the purpose of the epistle is not to develop a central theme but to show how the fundamental parts of the believers' lives ought to be expressed.³⁵ Aletti gives no clues as to what "showing how the essential parts of believers' lives ought to be expressed" should be classified as if not as a central theme. Therefore, it seems reasonable that this is Aletti's *stasis* even if he never identifies it as such.

Let us now turn to our own proposed *propositio*, which we earlier suggested is to be found at 1:9b-12a, in order to attempt to retrieve the questions which lie at the origin of the document. In so doing we will attempt to discover the *quaestio*, *causa*, and *stasis* of Colossians. In these verses Paul reveals his intentions for writing, the objectives he hopes to fulfill in and through the Colossians:³⁶

³³"...le thème principal d'une épître se donne à reconnaître dans la *propositio* ou la *partitio* principales, s'il y en a," *ibid.*, 42.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 119-122.

³⁵"On montrera d'ailleurs que Col n'a pas pour but de développer un thème central ou dominant, mais de montrer comment doivent s'articuler les composantes essentielles de la vie des croyants," *ibid.*, 42.

³⁶I have ordered the text in the following fashion in order to highlight the passage's grammatical construction.

οὐ πανόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ
αἰτούμενοι,

ἵνα πληρωθῇτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος
αὐτοῦ
ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ
καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ,

περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν
ἀρεσκείαν,
ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες
καὶ ἀνυξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ,
ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ
κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ
εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν
καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς·.
εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ...

Paul reveals in this passage his deep and sincere desire for his audience. The seriousness and intensity of the desire is stressed by the hyperbolic "we do not cease..." and by the use of *hendiadys* "praying and begging", the repetition of meaning acting to amplify the actions of Paul and his co-workers in the minds and hearts of his hearers. In this way it combines both a logical (*logos*) and an emotional (*pathos*) appeal.

The purpose of Paul's and his companions' fervent prayers—and their present letter—directly involves his audience. It is a goal which he wishes to accomplish primarily in them and secondarily through them. He introduces it with the telic use of the conjunction *ἵνα* combined with a second person plural verb "in order that you..." The primary goal which he seeks to accomplish in his audience is that they "be filled with the knowledge of [God's] will..." This, however, is not a complete expression of Paul's purpose. This primary goal has a goal of its own

which is introduced by the infinitive of purpose *περιπατῆσαι*. The objective of the objective of his audience being filled with the knowledge of God's will is that they "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him". This secondary objective is then elaborated upon through the introduction of four participles in three participial phrases: 1) *καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι*, 2) *δυναμούμενοι*, and 3) *εὐχαριστοῦντες*.

From this brief examination of the *propositio* it appears that the *causa* of Colossians is complex. It seems to consist of two closely interrelated *quaestiones*. The first question may be reconstructed as: "Do the Colossian Christians have a full understanding of God's will?"; the second question as: "Are the Colossians living in a manner which fully pleases God, as is appropriate for Christians?"³⁷ Both of these questions are definite questions because they deal with actual persons and facts, not simply with general philosophical speculation. These questions are rational, not legal, because neither involves whether a charge has been brought against a defendant in accordance with a written law.

A hypothetical reconstruction of the situation of conflicting opinions which gave rise to these questions is as follows:

FIRST CLAIM (*κατάφασις*): The information available to Paul from Epaphras and Onesimus about the church at Colossae is positive. They have responded favorably to the gospel which is at work in them (1:6) bringing forth the fruits of faith, love, and hope (1:4f). This information leads to the claim that the church at

³⁷It could also be proposed that there is in fact only one *causa*: that the Colossians walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing him fully. The first, that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will, would then be seen as subordinate to this *summa causa*, as a necessary prerequisite to it.

Colossae is healthy both in their doctrine and in their practice.

COUNTER CHARGE (ἀπόφασις): Paul, however, is not content with the current situation. Although all is relatively well at the moment in Colossae, the church is still young, inexperienced, and uninstructed in much Christian doctrine. From his years of missionary experience he knows that there are many dangers which young, inexperienced churches can face. Epaphras may indeed have told him that some either in or outside of the congregation have been suggesting that a more stringent form of worship could be beneficial or even necessary. All of these factors leave Paul happy, thankful, and hopeful, but also anxious, worried, and concerned. Thus the information available to him also leads to a counter-claim within him: the church's long-term doctrinal and practical life is threatened by their lack of full understanding of what God's will in the cosmos and for their individual lives is.

FIRST *QUAESTIO* (τὸ κρινόμενον): The resultant question from this conflict of causes is: "Do the Colossians have a *complete enough* understanding of God's will?" For Paul the answer is "no", or it at least presents a situation of such serious doubt (*dubium*) that he feels compelled enough to write to alter the situation.

SECOND CLAIM (κατάφασις): Paul's concern for the church, however, is not limited to their understanding of the deep mysteries of Christian dogma. His concern for intellectual matters has an objective: living so as to please God in everything. Clearly this is thoroughly intertwined with the first claim and question, and like the first claim this second claim is positive. The Colossians have responded favorably to the gospel which is bearing its good fruits of faith, love, and hope in them (1:4-6). So the second claim (now more specific than the first) is that the Colossians are living lives pleasing to God.

COUNTER CHARGE (ἀπόφασις): Paul is again concerned on the one hand that the Colossians may encounter temptations which could lead them away from their present path of righteous living and on the other hand that with a fuller understanding of God's will in history and in themselves they have the potential to live yet more fully in what pleases God. He is worried that they may be tempted to follow forms of piety which shift emphasis away from the lordship of Christ and towards various

philosophies and traditions which emphasize the importance of observing special days and dietary laws and the severe treatment of the body (2:6-23). He is worried that their immature understanding may mean that they are still tolerating pagan elements in their lifestyles (fornication, greed, malice; 3:5-10) and not managing their domestic relationships (3:18-4:1) or those with outsiders (4:5f) appropriately. These concerns lead to a second counter charge: the Colossians' incomplete understanding of God's will is threatening their current achievements towards living in a manner pleasing to God and, furthermore, is severely restricting their potential for progress in this area.

SECOND *QUAESTIO* (τὸ κρινόμενον): The question resulting then from this conflict of causes is: "Are the Colossians living in such a way as to please God *fully*, as is fitting for Christians?" Again Paul feels sufficiently enough in doubt that he is motivated to write in order to confirm his audience in the Way.

From this examination it can be concluded that both questions exhibit qualitative *stases*, which is typical of deliberative and epideictic rhetoric.³⁸ This can be better seen by a full *stasis* analysis of both questions:

FIRST QUESTION: "Do the Colossians have a complete understanding of God's will?"

1) *An sit?* - Paul concedes that the Colossians have knowledge: they have received the word of truth and know the grace of God which they learned from Epaphras (1,5-7). The claim of the Colossians to have knowledge is admitted. Therefore the *stasis* is not one of conjecture.

2) *Quid sit?* - Neither does Paul dispute the definition of the Colossians' knowledge. What they have come to know through Epaphras is indeed wisdom and understanding of the will of God. Therefore the *stasis* is not one of definition.

3) *Quale sit?* - But what Paul does question is the non-essential nature (the fullness) of the Colossians' knowledge. It is not yet full or complete (1:9). There is

³⁸*InstOr* 3,8,4; 7,4,1-3; *DeInv* 2,4-59.

room for growth. Therefore the *stasis* of the first *quaestio* is qualitative.³⁹

SECOND QUESTION: "Are the Colossians living in a manner which pleases God fully, as is fitting for Christians?" It is immediately seen that this is again a *stasis* of quality, following the first almost identically.

1) *An sit?* - Paul acknowledges that the Colossians have good works: they have displayed love for the saints (1:4) and are bearing fruit from the gospel (1:6). The dispute is not over whether or not they are doing actions which please God and are appropriate for Christians; therefore the *stasis* is not conjectural.

2) *Quid sit?* - Neither does the dispute center around the essential nature of what constitutes living so as to please God or what is appropriate behavior for Christians. As mentioned, the Colossians seem to realize that the Christian life is to be characterized by faith, hope, and love (1:4f). So it is not a question of definition.

3) *Quale sit?* - Instead it is the non-essential nature of their conduct as Christians, the extent, the quality of their living to please God, which is questioned: are they *in all things* living to please God (1,10)?⁴⁰

In summation then we may conclude that Colossians is characterized by a complex *causa* with two definite, rational *summae quaestiones* both of which reflect a qualitative *stasis*.

III.B. THE RHETORICAL GENRE

Now that the *causa*, *quaestiones* and *stases* of Colossians have been determined, there remains to be identified the document's rhetorical genre.

³⁹The qualitative nature of the question is particularly confirmed by the adverbial prepositional phrase *ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ*. Lausberg (*Handbuch*, 52 and 66) points out that qualitative *stases* are characterized by such an adverbial element.

⁴⁰The qualitative nature of the question is again confirmed by a string of adverbial prepositional phrases stressing totality (a matter of degree, and thus a qualitative concept): *εἰς πάντα ἀρεσκείαν, ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες...ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι...εἰς πάντα ὑπομονήν*.

Knowing a document's *genus* can be an important factor in understanding the intent of the author and the power and effect of the text upon the original audience. The different *genera* presuppose different purposes and effect different results. Diverse outlines and diverse understandings of an author's goals and message may emerge dependent upon which *genus* the critic assumes a document to be.

III.B.1. Difficulties with Classical Categories

Genera are artificial, man-made categorizations of texts. It is unlikely that any discourse ever fit perfectly into a *genus* category.⁴¹ And indeed in some sense every discourse is its own genre. Additionally, "the freedom ancient writers exercised in the mixing of genres and in the organization of a discourse complicates rhetorical analysis making a measure of subjectivity unavoidable."⁴² Nonetheless, it is impossible to know more about a discourse apart from discovering what makes it similar and dissimilar to other discourses. And this involves classification and categorization.

Whether or not the classical *genera* should be applied to Biblical texts is disputed. Aristotle proposed a three-category system which predominated throughout classical times and which other rhetors extended by creating numerous sub-

⁴¹"...a genre is a category...genres are generalizations. As such they are both true and false...They are made by humans out of the mind's penchant for observing similarities and differences in things, to provide order to understanding....Genres are constituted through an examination of actual instances of discourse. They are inductive generalizations, not dialectically apprehended noumenal forms." Fisher, W.R. "Genre: Concepts and Applications in Rhetorical Criticism" *WJSpCom*, 44 (1980), 291; subsequently Fisher, "Genre".

⁴²Lyons, G. *Pauline Autobiography*, (SBLDS 73; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 64; subsequently Lyons, *Autobiography*.

categories,⁴³ but a number of other systems could be employed.

Rhetorical discourse forms have been made by reference to place: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic (Aristotle); to communication intent: to please, to inform, to convince, and to persuade (George Campbell); to style of composition: narration, exposition, argument, and persuasion (followers of Hugh Blair); to aims (Kinneavy); and to motives: affirmation, reaffirmation, purification, and subversion (Fisher).⁴⁴

There have been recent attempts to modify the Aristotelian genre classifications for New Testament studies. T. Olbricht has suggested the introduction of a fourth *genus* for Jewish and Christian writings—synagogue or church rhetoric.⁴⁵ W. Wuellner has also written of his hope for the discovery of some genre system for the New Testament which would occupy a middle ground between the Aristotelian genres on the one hand and the literary genres on the other.⁴⁶

Olbricht's basic concern is valid, but his solution of adding a fourth genre to Aristotle's three seems flawed. One must ask whether Olbricht's new genre actually fits in with the original three Aristotelian *genera*. Immediately Olbricht is forced to create a number of sub-categories which resemble Fisher's motive theory of communication. Olbricht fails to take into account Aristotle's claim that he was offering a universal system of classification. Furthermore, he provides no reason for

⁴³*ArRhet*, 1,3,1-6; as for the later creation of sub-categories, one need only consider a work such as Menander's (*MenRhet*) which lists 23 types of speeches of praise.

⁴⁴Fisher, "Genre", 292.

⁴⁵Olbricht, "Aristotelian Analysis", 216-236. The main factor in distinguishing such a *genus* would be the central focus of such literature on the reality of God.

⁴⁶Wuellner, W. "The Rhetorical Genre of Jesus' Sermon in Luke 12.1-13.9" in *Persuasive Artistry*, ed. D. Watson (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1991), 93-118.

stopping with only a fourth genre. By his standards new genres could also be allowed for "business rhetoric" or "academic rhetoric" or innumerable others.

Olbricht and Weullner are right in seeing that the writings of the New Testament do not always correspond perfectly with hellenistic rhetorical theory. But until a Jewish and/or Christian rhetoric is more adequately categorized the most exhaustive and accessible resource remains the classical manuals.

In spite of their temporal and ethnic origins, the Aristotelian categories are based upon solid principles of communication which were intended to be universal and which remain a very useful method for dividing and distinguishing, examining and evaluating discourses as works of rhetoric. A re-examination of Aristotle's genre theory will reveal the universal nature of the principles upon which it is founded and demonstrate why it has endured for so long a time.

III.B.2. The Three Rhetorical *Genera*⁴⁷

Aristotle was the first to have classified orations into the three *genera* of judicial, deliberative, and epideictic, and his work became the foundation for all classical genre theory.⁴⁸ Aristotle divided every act of communication (ἡ

⁴⁷*ArRhet* 1,3,1-9; *InstOr* 2,21,23; 3,3,14-15; 3,4,12-15; *DeInv* 1,5,7; *Top* 24,91; *AdHer* 1,2,2; Lausberg, *Handbuch* 51-61; Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 9-10; 15-210.

⁴⁸Theoretically at least, there is no speech which falls outside the Aristotelian tripartite division of rhetoric: "Die durch Deduktion gewonnene aristotelische Einteilung der Redegegenstände in drei *genera* ist elastisch genug, alle möglichen Redegegenstände zu erfassen: Quint. 2,21,23 *Aristoteles tres faciendo partes orationis, iudiciale, deliberativam, demonstrativam, paene* (>praktisch<) *et ipse oratori subiecit omnia: nihil enim non in haec cadit.* - Quint. 3,4,15 *Ceterae species in haec tria incident genera, nec invenietur ex his ulla in qua non laudare ac vituperare, suadere ac dissuadere, intendere quid vel depellere debeamus*" (Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 60-61). Cf. *ArRhet*, 1,3,1-6.

There were ancient theorists who thought there were more than three genres of rhetoric. In

ῥητορικῇ) into three parts: the speaker (ὁ λέγων), the subject upon which he speaks (οὗ λέγει), and the audience to whom he directs his speech (πρὸς ὃν λέγει). The audience are those to whom the end or purpose (τέλος) of the speech is directed. Aristotle noted that every audience is active in passing a judgement of some sort. This is one of the main factors upon which he based his classification of rhetorical discourses. He concluded that an audience can pass judgement upon past actions and events (the judicial *genus*), upon future actions and events (the deliberative *genus*), or as spectators upon the ability of the orator (the epideictic *genus*).

Thus each *genus* has its own peculiar time reference: the judicial is mainly past-oriented since accusation and defense predominantly look toward the past; deliberative is mainly future-oriented because advice and dissuasion are usually offered in regard to what is not yet; and epideictic is supposedly present-oriented since it is the existing condition of something which is considered for either praise or blame.

The goal (τέλος) which the orator seeks to accomplish in the audience is distinct in each *genus*. Judicial rhetoric seeks to persuade the audience to pass judgement on some past event or action; therefore it forces the question of whether it was right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust (δίκαιον ἢ ἀδίκον). The deliberative seeks to persuade the audience to pass judgement on an event or course of action which is yet to be; thus it raises the question of whether it will be

fact, Quintilian mentions (*InstOr* 3,4,2) that even Cicero had claimed that the number of kinds of rhetoric was really beyond enumeration (cf. *DeOr* 2,10ff)!

profitable or unprofitable, advantageous or disadvantageous, expedient or harmful (συμφέρον ἢ βλαβερόν). And epideictic seeks to persuade the audience to judge the current state of something; is it worthy of praise or unworthy, honorable or disgraceful (καλόν ἢ αἰσχρόν)?

The following is a diagram of Aristotle's concept of rhetoric and its genres:



The factors differentiating Aristotle's *genera* are illustrated in the following diagram:

<i>Genus:</i>	<u>JUDICIAL</u>	<u>EPIDEICTIC</u>	<u>DELIBERATIVE</u>
<i>Time Referent:</i>	Past	Present	Future
<i>Topics:</i>	Justice/Injustice	Virtue/Vice	Advantage/ Disadvantage
<i>Aspect of Proof:</i>	Accusation/Defense	Praise/Blame	Persuasion/Dissuasion
<i>Method of Proof:</i>	Enthymeme	Amplification	Example
<i>End:</i>	To Pass Judgement	To Strengthen Assent to Values; for Pleasure	To Decide on a Course of Action

All three types, nonetheless, are interreliant; each commonly employs the assistance of the other two types to accomplish its end.⁴⁹ In particular, epideictic was recognized as playing a major role in the judicial and deliberative genres.⁵⁰ In actual discourse it is possible for various elements of the three genres to become

⁴⁹"Die Reden jedes der drei *genera* können natürlich Elemente der beiden anderen *genera* enthalten, besonders wenn durch die Länge der Rede Exkurse möglich sind. Es gibt also im *genus iudiciale* deliberative und epideiktische Elemente. Im *genus deliberativum* gibt es judiciale und epideiktische Elemente. Das *genus demonstrativum* wird als Hilfsbestandteil der beiden übrigen *genera* verwandt" (Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 60-61; see also *RhetAlex* 5,1427b,31ff; *InstOr* 3,4,16).

⁵⁰*AdHer* 3,8,15; In fact, according to Burgess, Isocrates considered the ideal speech to be a mixture of epideictic and deliberative. Burgess, T.C. *Epideictic Literature* (SCP 3; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902; repr. New York: Garland, 1987), 101 (subsequently Burgess, *Epideictic*); see also *InstOr* 3,4,11; Kennedy, G.A. *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 188-190; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 47-51.

mixed with one another. For example, it is possible to ask about a past event whether it was advantageous or harmful; or about a future action whether it will be honorable or disgraceful, just or unjust. Aristotle recognized this apparent weakness in his classification system, but countered it by claiming the supremacy of the unique *τέλος* of each *genus*. As an example of what he meant he explained that any orator engaged in advising a certain future course of action (deliberation) may even admit that the action he proposes is in fact unjust or not worthy of praise (e.g. the enslavement of a neighboring people), but he will never admit that it is disadvantageous or harmful to the audience. And this same type of argument can be shown to hold true for the other *genera* and their ends as well.⁵¹

This mixing of the *genera*, however, means that it is not always easy to determine with confidence to which *genus* a discourse belongs. This can be especially true when attempting to distinguish between deliberative and epideictic orations. Most discourses—of whatever *genus*—commonly employ topics which are predominantly representations of the other *genera*. This was recognized by Quintilian:

...you will not find one in which we have not to praise or blame, to advise or dissuade, to drive home or refute a charge....all three kinds rely on the mutual assistance of the other. For we deal with justice and expediency in panegyric and with honor in deliberations, while you will rarely find

⁵¹For example, an advocate's plea in court (which is certainly judicial in genre) could consist almost entirely of epideictic and deliberative material. The advocate could praise the life, character, and actions of his client (*encomium*) and castigate his accuser (*vituperatio*); this is nothing other than epideictic. He could go on to advise the jury of the advantages to be gained (*persuasio*) and the dangers to be avoided (*dissuasio*) by choosing not to condemn his client; this is obviously deliberative. But, as pointed out by Aristotle, the *genus* of the speech must be seen as judicial because its goal is judgement about the justice/injustice of a past action.

a forensic case, in part of which at any rate something of those questions just mentioned is not to be found.⁵²

In practical terms the difficulties in classifying a document's genre become apparent when we consider that New Testament rhetorical critics seem unable to determine with certainty the *genus* of several of the New Testament's works. A good example is the disagreement among scholars as to the classification of Galatians. This letter has been classified as each of the three Aristotelian genres by one rhetorical critic or another. The first rhetorical critical analysis of any New Testament book was carried out by H.-D. Betz on Galatians in 1975.⁵³ He concluded that Galatians should be understood as an "apologetic" letter of the judicial *genus*.⁵⁴ Later George Kennedy proposed that the epistle be viewed as a deliberative discourse.⁵⁵ More recently, J. Hester has insisted that Galatians must be understood as epideictic in nature.⁵⁶

As to be expected, the difficulties in distinguishing rhetorical *genera* are particularly acute in New Testament rhetorical criticism with regard to epideictic and deliberative. This has led to conflicting identifications in a number of studies

⁵²*InstOr* 3,4,15-16: ...*nec invenietur ex his ulla, in qua non laudare ac vituperare, suadere ac dissuadere, intendere quid vel depellere debeamus...Stant enim quodammodo mutuis auxiliis omnia. Nam et in laude iustitia utilitasque tractatur et in consiliis honestas, et raro iudicalem inveneris causam, in cuius non parte aliquid eorum, quae supra diximus, reperiatur.*

⁵³Betz, "Literary Composition"; see also his commentary on *Galatians*.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 354ff.

⁵⁵Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 144-152; the same conclusion is reached by Lyons, *Autobiography*, 173-174; Hall, R.G. "The Rhetorical Outline of Galatians: a Reconsideration" *JBL* 106 (1987), 277-287; and Smit, J. "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech" *NTS* 35 (1989), 1-26.

⁵⁶Hester, "Placing the Blame", 307.

on the New Testament Pauline epistles.⁵⁷ These two genres can share several qualities. For instance, they share a concern for the honorable;⁵⁸ both genres appeal to the topic of the honorable/dishonorable in attempting to accomplish their ends. And both may rely upon present time reference.

The key factor by which to distinguish the deliberative from the epideictic is the goal or effect (τέλος) intended by the author:

Whereas in both deliberative and judicial causes the speaker seeks to persuade his hearers to a course of action, in epideictic his primary purpose is by means of his art to impress his ideas upon them, without action as a goal.⁵⁹

It should be remembered that classical rhetoricians placed strict limits upon the epideictic genre. The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* considered that actual independent epideictic discourses were rare, but that epideictic was a useful and prominent part of both judicial and deliberative works.⁶⁰ Quintilian wrote that both Aristotle and his famous student and successor, Theophrastos, separated epideictic almost entirely from practical concerns and restricted it almost exclusively

⁵⁷In addition to the troubles in classifying Galatians, for example, Kennedy lists 1 Corinthians as deliberative (*NT Interpretation*, 145), while Wuellner claims it belongs to the epideictic *genus* ("Paul as Pastor: The Function of Rhetorical Questions in First Corinthians" in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère*, ed. A. Vanhoye [BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986], 49-77).

⁵⁸As Quintilian says, "But panegyric is akin to deliberative oratory inasmuch as the same things are usually praised in the former as are advised in the latter" (*[Laudativum] autem habet aliquid simile suasoriis, quia plerumque eadem illic suaderi, hic laudari solent*, *InstOr* 3,7,28).

⁵⁹H. Caplan's footnote, in his translation of *AdHer* (LCL), pp. 172-173. Foster concurs that the primary concern of the deliberative genre is the choice of a course of action, "Development of Stasis", 119.

⁶⁰*AdHer*, 3,8,15.

to entertainment.⁶¹ And in Quintilian epideictic remains a small and limited genre.

Aristotle (in making basic observations of what communication consists of and how it functions) realized that any classification of discourses must necessarily focus upon the audience since it is there, in the soul of the audience, that the speaker desires communication to take place. That is to say, the essential nature of the discourse is determined not so much by the subject it treats as by the effect it is intended to create within the soul of the audience. This is why, in attempting to determine a basic criterion for categorizing types of audiences, Aristotle chose the effect (*τέλος*) upon the soul of the audience which the speaker seeks to create.

As noted, Aristotle identified two such potential effects: judging and spectating (which, as we have seen, is itself a type of judgement). These could perhaps be better expressed by words such as "action" and "experience". The goal of the orator is thus either to cause the audience to carry out some action (or to prevent them from carrying out some action) or to cause the audience passively to experience some emotion. The rhetoric which aims at producing passive emotional experience Aristotle termed epideictic. Stress must be placed upon the passive nature of the objective of epideictic since both judicial and deliberative rhetoric employ the audience's emotions but with the intention of producing action beyond the soul.⁶²

The rhetoric of judgement, the rhetoric which seeks to produce some action

⁶¹*InstOr*, 3,7,1ff.

⁶²Modern rhetorical theory has attempted to stress a different quality of epideictic. Whereas judicial and deliberative oratory revolve around judgement (either of past events or future actions); epideictic, according to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (*New Rhetoric*, 47-49) "is to increase the intensity of adherence to values held in common by the audience and speaker." It solidifies the foundation of common values upon which deliberative and judicial orations may be constructed.

beyond the soul, Aristotle further divided on the basis of the time reference of the object of the audience's judgement, as noted above.

Generally speaking, judgement of things past begins with historic fact (e.g. Alexander is dead) and asks the audience to draw a conclusion from this fact (e.g. Antiochus murdered Alexander) assisted, at the least, by conjectural fact (e.g. Antiochus is the type of fellow who could have murdered Alexander). Its objective is intellectual decision *and* action (e.g. the execution of Antiochus). If it were to stop only at producing emotion or even merely intellectual decision (a conception of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the past action under discussion) it would be epideictic, but because it calls the audience to do something it becomes judicial.⁶³

In general, judgement of things future begins with conjectural fact (e.g. The Persians will attack) and asks the audience to draw a conclusion from this fact (e.g. We must seek an alliance with Sparta) assisted by historical fact (e.g. The Persians have increased the size of their forces on our border). Once again its objective is both intellectual decision *and* action (e.g. the negotiation and conclusion of a treaty with Sparta). Again, if it were to stop at producing only an emotion or an intellectual conclusion (an evaluation of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the future action under discussion) it would be epideictic, but because it calls the

⁶³See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 86-123; Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 15-166; Kennedy, G.A. *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 7-18; subsequently Kennedy, *Art of Rhetoric*.

audience to do something (e.g. to send ambassadors to negotiate a treaty) it becomes deliberative.

By their nature both judicial and deliberative rhetoric intend *to compel* their audiences to action. They seek to instill in their audiences a certain imbalance or disruption of the soul which requires action (intentionally that prescribed by the orator) to regain lost equilibrium. This is why the orator may seek to fill his audience with hatred, disgust, and loathing for both a crime and a criminal, and to create in the audience the thirst for the blood of revenge as though they themselves were the victims of murder or as though the victim were their very own dear son or daughter, mother or father. Thus judicial and deliberative rhetoric are directed towards the emotions as much as is epideictic, since all action is dependent upon—and guaranteed by—emotion of some sort. But they differ from epideictic in that they call for action from the audience, and that usually a specified action.

In attempting to discern the rhetorical *genus* of Colossians, it is essential to investigate the effect the author wanted his discourse to have upon the souls of his audience. Did he only seek to produce a passive emotional experience? Then it is an epideictic document. But if he sought to produce or prevent real action such as arises beyond the soul, then Colossians is a deliberative or judicial document.⁶⁴

But in spite of these difficulties in classifying a document's rhetorical *genus*, the traditional categories should not be abandoned unless they can be shown to do

⁶⁴Occasionally, though rarely, a further difficulty may arise when dealing with a document which has undergone incomplete redaction. Such a text may lack sufficient unity to determine its *genus* as a single unified text. This, however, does not seem to be the case with Colossians.

harm to the intentions of the text. In most cases, however, the traditional Aristotelian classifications can significantly enlighten our understanding of the text's purpose and provide us with clear guidelines for a reliable rhetorical analysis.

III.B.3. The *Genus* of Colossians

Among the rhetorical commentators on Colossians, neither Melancthon nor Aletti make any attempt to classify the epistle under any Aristotelian genre. According to Hatfield, Paul's letters do not fit any particular rhetorical genre, rather rhetorical forms and sections appear in non-prescribed patterns within the epistolographical framework of the letters; Paul's letters are rhetorical, but break classical rules of rhetoric.⁶⁵ Colossians consists, he contends, of a mixture of epideictic and deliberative genres.⁶⁶

The cause of Colossians is, in fact, deliberative. The epistle attempts to persuade and dissuade its audience concerning certain courses of action. This is seen in the *propositio* (1:9b-12a) where (as noted in the discussion on *stasis* above) the Apostle sets out his desires and intentions for his hearers. His objective is two-fold: that his hearers may know God's will more fully, and thereby live so as to please him fully. It is clear that the Apostle's cause is motivated primarily by doubt (*dubium*) in the sufficiency of his audience's knowledge, and secondarily, following

⁶⁵Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 224f.

⁶⁶Ibid., 157.

from this, by how their knowledge affects the course of their lives and actions. His primary concern is to teach them; his secondary concern is to advise them on the way they should live, thus keeping them from a disadvantageous/inexpedient course. Thus his objective is to instruct and to advise. Paul tries to persuade his readers of the advantages of following his advice and of the dangers of following opposing tenets. There are typical appeals to actions which will provide security (*tuta*) and honor (*honesta*). In 1:22-23 he threatens his readers by stating that their secure state before God depends upon their faithfulness to the Gospel. In 2:6-8 he again warns them that to follow certain teachings can mislead, divert, and endanger their spiritual health. He commands them to continue in obedience to Christ. In 2:16-19 he warns his readers to avoid falling under the judgement of legalistically minded individuals. It is to the Colossians' advantage to resist falling under the sway of such people. The entire section running from 3:12-4:6 can be regarded as an extended series of appeals to the honorable. As is to be expected of a deliberative discourse,⁶⁷ these and other appeals to honor in the epistle are based upon the right (*rectum*) and the praiseworthy (*laudabile*); that is, upon wisdom (*prudentia*; 1:9-10,28; 4:5) and upon temperance (*modestia*; 3:5,8).

The verbal elements of the *propositio* clearly indicate a future time referent. The author is seeking an objective in the future, an objective which encompasses specific, defined actions. Simultaneously, the epistle contains large segments in past

⁶⁷*AdHer* 3,2,3ff.

and present time referents.⁶⁸ These mainly serve to accomplish the deliberative goals of instructing (e.g. 1:13-22 in a past time referent) and advising (e.g. 2:6-10 in a present time referent). The deliberative goals are meant to be effected in the near future, the immediate future, and to continue indefinitely. They are often expressed in present imperatives (e.g. 3:18ff).

In spite of an element of past time reference and the use of enthymemes, Colossians should not be identified as a judicial discourse. The author mentions past actions, namely those of the Colossians (1:4-8), of the Father and Christ (1:13-22), and of the Apostle himself (1:24-2:2), but in so doing his purpose is not primarily that his readers render a verdict on these claims, rather that as a result of these past actions they should think and act as he advises. The goal of the oration is not judicial; this is not a judicial document.

Neither should Colossians be considered as epideictic although, as Hatfield maintains, it makes extensive use of that genre. The two traditional divisions of the letter—the theological exposition and the following exhortation to remain true to the knowledge proclaimed in that exposition—reflect the epideictic and deliberative genres respectively.⁶⁹ Epideictic passages include the *encomium* to Christ (1:13-22) and the invective against his opponents (2:18-19). But these and other epideictic sections serve the deliberative goals of instruction and modification of behavior. The epideictic sections also function as modern rhetoricians propose: they strengthen the

⁶⁸*ArRhet* 1,6,1 and 1,8,7 indicate that the present often plays a large role in deliberative orations.

⁶⁹See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 53-61; and A.T. Lincoln's commentary on *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Waco: Word, 1990), xli, who draws similar conclusions regarding that letter.

foundations of common values upon which deliberative and judicial discourses depend for their effect.⁷⁰ The epideictic portions of Colossians are ensuring that the audience stands upon the same moral, decision-making ground. But as such they are not an end in themselves. They prepare the audience to respond favorably to the pleas of the deliberative sections of the document. The epideictic of Colossians is subservient, subordinate to the ultimate intent of the author which is deliberative. For this reason Colossians should not be classified as epideictic.

In summation then, Colossians is a deliberative document which incorporates a large amount of epideictic and certain elements common to judicial rhetoric to accomplish its persuasive, future-time oriented objective: a change in the audience's knowledge and behavior. The combination of epideictic and deliberative elements makes for a more powerful overall impact upon the audience. The document's argumentation concentrates its efforts upon instruction in a "fuller" Christian knowledge so as to persuade the audience to follow a path of Christian conduct which is portrayed as more fully pleasing to God.

⁷⁰The role of epideictic "is to intensify adherence to values, adherence without which discourses that aim at provoking action cannot find the lever to move or inspire their listeners....The goal is always to strengthen a consensus around certain values which one wants to see prevail and which should orient actions in the future. It is in this way that all practical philosophy arises from the epideictic genre." Perelman, C. *The Realm of Rhetoric*, trans. W. Kluback (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 19-20. Note also Burgess, *Epideictic*, 96, 101-102, 229-234 on the close links between epideictic and deliberative.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RHETORICAL INVENTION, ARRANGEMENT AND STYLE

IV. CONSIDERATIONS OF INVENTION, ARRANGEMENT, AND STYLE

The fourth step in Kennedy's methodology of rhetorical criticism is the detailed examination of the discourse's rhetorical components which includes consideration of how the author managed the materials of invention and his use of style in his attempt to persuade his audience to alter the exigence in the manner he suggests. This constitutes the rhetorical analysis proper, the previous steps having been preliminary investigations.

After these considerations of preliminary matters the rhetorical critic is prepared to proceed to consider the arrangement of material in the text: what subdivisions it falls into, what the persuasive effect of these parts seems to be, and how they work together—or fail to do so—to some unified purpose in meeting the rhetorical situation. In order to do this he will need to engage in line-by-line analysis of the argument, including its assumptions, its topics, and its formal features, such as enthymemes, and of the devices of style, seeking to define their function in context. This process will reveal how the raw material has been worked out or rhetorically amplified both in context and in style.¹

A rhetorical outline has already been proposed for the epistle in Chapter one and is repeated here at the beginning of Chapter four for convenient reference:

- I. 1:1-2 epistolary prescript
 - A. 1:1 *superscriptio*
 - B. 1:2a *adscriptio*
 - C. 1:2b *salutatio*
 - (1:3 transitional clause)
- II. 1:3-8 *προοίμιον* (*exordium/principium*; with qualities of *διήγησις/narratio*)

¹Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 37.

- A. (1:3-8 *encomium* for the Colossians)-epideictic
- B. 1:5-6 *encomium* for Gospel
- C. 1:7-8 *encomium* for Epaphras
(1:9a transitional clause)
- III. 1:9-12a *πρόθεσις* (*propositio/declaratio*); chiasmic
 - A. 1:9b-10a *propositio*
 - B. 1:10b-12a *partitio*
 - 1. 1:10b bearing fruit and growing in knowledge
 - 2. 1:11 persevering
 - 3. 1:12 giving thanks to the Father
(1:12a transitional clause)
- IV. 1:12b-4:6 *πίστις* (*argumentatio*)
 - C. 1:12b-23a elaborated argument;
thankfulness: *encomium* to the Father (*ἐγκώμιον/demonstratio*)
 - 1. the Father's action in redemption
 - 2. the Father praised through his son: *encomium* for the Son
 - 3. the Father's action in redemption
(1:21-23a transitional clause)
 - B. 1:23-2:5 elaborated argument;
perseverance: Paul, example of joyful endurance
(*παράδειγμα/exemplum*)
(2:4-5 transitional clause)
 - A. 2:6-4:6 elaborated argument;
knowledge and good works: comparison of two ways
(*σύγκρισις/comparatio*)
 - 1. 2:8-23 *ἀνασκευή/refutatio*
 - a. 2:8-15 on avoiding deception
 - b. 2:16-23 on christian liberty
 - 2. 3:1-4:6 *κατασκευή/confirmatio*
 - a. 3:1-4 on seeking heavenly things
 - b. 3:5-11 on putting off vice
 - c. 3:12-17 on putting on virtue
 - d. 3:18-4:1 on domestic harmony
 - e. 4:2-6 on christian vigilance
 - 4:7-18 epistolary postscript (no true *ἐπίλογος/peroratio*)
 - 4:7-9 "recommendation" of Tychicus and Onesimus
 - 4:10-17 closing greetings
 - 4:15-17 final commands
 - 4:18a signature
 - 4:18b benediction

IV.A. THE ΠΡΟΟΙΜΙΟΝ

Although the prescript (1:1-2) serves a unique epistolological function in the

letter, in our detailed examination of Colossians it will be dealt with in combination with the *exordium* since it shares certain rhetorical characteristics with the *exordium*.

IV.A.1. THE EPISTOLARY PRESCRIPT (1:1-2)

On account of its stereotypical features, it is not at all difficult to distinguish the epistolary framework of Colossians from the body of the letter. The prescript clearly occupies 1:1-2 while the postscript includes 4:7-18. Among the rhetorical commentators, Melanchthon distinguishes the prescript, which he calls the *epigrapha*, from the *exordium* which he believes occupies 1:3-11.² He makes no overt mention of any potential rhetorical function for his *epigrapha*.³ Hatfield includes the prescript as part of the *exordium* which he proposes runs from 1:1-14 and consists of greetings, thanksgiving, and prayer.⁴ Aletti separates the prescript from the *exordium* which he suggests occupies 1:3-23, and makes only passing reference to the prescript's possible rhetorical functions.⁵

The epistolary prescript does possess certain exordial functions although it is not technically a recognized rhetorical part. It was included due to the necessity

²Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 21.

³He does, however, attribute certain exordial functions to it. For example, he suggests that the affixation of the title "Apostle" in 1:1 gives the force of divine authority to the discourse which follows. See Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 31f.

⁴Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 182f.

⁵He insists correctly that ἁγίους (1:2) be translated as "holy" due in part to the major role played by holiness as a topic in the letter (e.g. 1:22). Aletti, *Colossians*, 47.

of the imprisoned author to send the work as a letter. Like other Pauline epistolary prescripts it includes standardized formulae and theological expressions. Like an *exordium*, the prescript functions to render the audience attentive, receptive, and well-disposed. There is an immediate confirmation of the author's *ethos*, and links can be drawn to topics to be discussed in detail later in the argumentation.

In his letters Paul uses both traditional-formal structures and innovative-creative ones. This is seen, for example, in his unique use of basic epistolary divisions and in the mix of Greek and Hebrew greetings in his salutations.⁶ The prescript of Colossians is typically Pauline in form following the anticipated sequence of:

superscriptio: Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ
θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός (v.1);

adscriptio: τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἀγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς
ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ (v.2a); and

salutatio: χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς
ἡμῶν, (v.2b).

This order of prescript has been called "oriental" in style and origin⁷ but obviously displays Christian reworking. Its length and content are similar to the other Paulines, although it is the shortest prescript in the Paulines apart from that of 1 Thessalonians.

⁶See Wilder, *Christian Rhetoric*, 34; Doty, W.G. *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 22; White, in his "Introductory Formula", 93-97, identifies six Pauline introductory formulae: 1) disclosure; 2) request; 3) joy; 4) astonishment; 5) compliance; and 6) formulaic use of hearing/learning verbs. These formulae function to introduce information by disclosing new or recalling old information to the attention of the readers.

⁷See Betz, "Literary Composition", 355.

This prescript most closely parallels those of 1) 2 Corinthians 1:1-2 (Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς... χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν...) which it duplicates word for word in *superscriptio* and *salutatio* (except for the omission of the final phrase καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), and of 2) Ephesians 1:1-2 which is identical in *superscriptio* (Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ - except for the omission of καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός), contains similarities in *adscriptio* (τοῖς ἁγίοις... καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ), and mirrors the *salutatio* (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν) except for the addition again of καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The structure of the prescript may be outlined as follows:

- 1:1 The name of the principle sender, his title with an assertion of its origin, the name of the co-sender, and the co-sender's title.
- 1:2a The naming of the addressees with an assertion of their status.
- 1:2b An abbreviated form of a typically Pauline salutation.

A brief discussion of *exordia* and the characteristics attributed to them in classical theory will be useful before continuing with our examination of the prescript and *prooimium*.

An *exordium* is not essential to an oration. According to Aristotle, in deliberative orations, like Colossians, an *exordium* is only necessary when there is some sort of conflict of opinion.⁸ But some sort of *exordium*-like introduction is

⁸*ArRhet* 3,13,3; 3,14,12; *PartOr* 4,13; cf. *InstOr* 3,8,6.

recommended so that the speech is not too rough or disjointed.⁹ As Quintilian noted:

Deliberative oratory does not always require an exordium, such as is necessary in forensic speeches, since he who asks an orator for his opinion is naturally well disposed to him. But the commencement, whatever be its nature, must have some resemblance to an exordium. For we must not begin abruptly or just at the point where the fancy takes us, since in every subject there is something which naturally comes first.¹⁰

Regardless of the rhetorical *genus* or conflicts of opinion, it is the objective of the orator, if he wishes to be effective, to assure that his audience is in the right frame of mind. The soul (*ψυχή*) of the auditor must be in the proper attitude to receive and be moved by the speech.

The ancient rhetoricians in general emphasized three attitudes of the soul which were considered to be of special importance in securing audience reception of a speech. Although these virtues were useful throughout an oration, they were especially important at the inception of the speech. The major task of the orator in his *exordium*, therefore, is to ensure that his audience is favorably disposed (*εὖνους/benivolus*), attentive (*προσεκτικός/attentus*), and receptive (*εὐμαθής/docilis*) to what he has to say.¹¹

⁹*ArRhet* 3,14,8; *InstOr* 3,8,6 and 10.

¹⁰*InstOr* 3,8,6 *Prooemio, quale est in iudicialibus, non ubique eget, quia conciliatus est ei quisque, quem consulit. Initium tamen quodcunque debet habere aliquam prooemii speciem; neque enim abrupte nec unde libuit incipiendum, quia est aliquid in omni materia naturaliter primum.*

¹¹Aristotle minimized the importance of the *exordium* for gaining the audience's attention. He claimed that the beginning of a speech was really the last place one should worry about such matters since it is at the beginning that the orator has the audience's attention (*ArRhet* 3,14,9), but clearly this is not always the case.

At times there seems to have been little difference made between the virtues of attentiveness and receptiveness.¹² Receptiveness is the quality of being ready to learn. It is a quality most essential in the audience when the cause is obscure, when the audience must be instructed in matters they do not know or which are difficult to understand.¹³ The ancient theorists give little advice as to how to make an audience receptive, except that this is best achieved by making the audience attentive first and may be aided by a brief summarization of the cause.¹⁴ Aristotle does mention that receptivity is particularly connected to the orator's *ethos*.¹⁵

The virtue of attentiveness was more fully treated by the ancient rhetoricians. They prescribed a number of methods for gaining the attention of an audience. Aristotle wrote:

Hearers pay most attention to things that are important, that concern their own interests, that are astonishing, that are agreeable; wherefore one should put the idea into their heads that the speech deals with such subjects. To make his hearers inattentive, the speaker must persuade them that the

¹²For example, *AdHer* 1,4,7: "...the receptive hearer is one who is willing to listen attentively" (...*docilis est qui adtente vult audire*).

¹³*DeInv* 1,16,21.

¹⁴*DeInv* 1,16,23: "We shall make the auditors receptive if we explain the essence of the case briefly and in plain language, that is, the point on which the controversy turns. For when you wish to make an auditor receptive you should also at the same time render him attentive. For he is most receptive who is prepared to listen most attentively." (*Dociles auditores faciemus si aperte et breviter summam causae exponemus, hoc est, in quo consistat controversia. Nam et, cum docilem velis facere, simul attentum facias oportet. Nam is est maxime docilis qui attentissime est paratus audire.*) Cf. *AdHer* 1,4,7.

¹⁵*ArRhet* 3,14,7: "As for rendering the hearers tractable, everything will lead up to it if a person wishes, including the appearance of respectability, because respectable persons command more attention" (εἰς δὲ εὐμάθειαν ἅπαντα ἀνάξει, ἐάν τις βούληται, καὶ τὸ ἐπιεικὴ φαίνεσθαι· προσέχουσι γὰρ μᾶλλον τούτοις).

matter is unimportant, that it does not concern them, that it is painful.¹⁶

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* gives a similar list while adding an element of particular relevance to New Testament rhetorical criticism:

We shall have attentive hearers by promising to discuss important, new, and unusual matters, or such as appertain to the commonwealth, or to the hearers themselves, or to the worship of the immortal gods; by bidding them listen attentively; and by enumerating the points we are going to discuss.¹⁷

The third quality which the orator should seek to instill in his audience is goodwill. Since the time of Aristotle, it was commonly taught that audience goodwill could be derived from four sources: the speaker, the opposition, the audience, and the subject itself.¹⁸

To construct an effective *exordium* the orator must employ anticipation. This involves determining the audience's disposition before speaking. If they are friendly you need only remind them of their goodwill. If they are neutral you should tell them that it is right to give you a favorable hearing, flatter their ability to make good and sound judgements, and employ self-depreciation. However, if they are prejudiced against you or your topic you must anticipate this and speak briefly in defense, shifting away any hint of blame from yourself or your cause. Anticipation

¹⁶*ArRhet* 3,14,7 προσεκτικοὶ δὲ τοῖς μεγάλοις, τοῖς ἰδίῳις, τοῖς θανμαστοῖς, τοῖς ἡδέσιν· διὸ δεῖ ἐμποιεῖν ὡς περὶ τοιούτων ὁ λόγος. ἔὰν δὲ μὴ προσεκτικούς, ὅτι μικρόν, ὅτι οὐδὲν πρὸς ἐκείνους, ὅτι λυπηρόν; cf. *ArRhet* 3,14,9.

¹⁷*AdHer* (1,5,8): *Adtentos habebimus, si pollicebimur nos de rebus magnis, novis, inusitatis verba facturos, aut de iis quae ad rem publicam pertineant, aut ad eos ipsos qui audient, aut ad deorum immortalium religionem; et si rogabimus ut adtente audiant; et si numero exponemus res quibus de rebus dicturi sumus.* Cf. *DeInv* 1,16,23; *RhetAlex* 29,1436b,1ff.

¹⁸*ArRhet* 3,14,7; cf. *AdHer* 1,5,8; *DeInv* 1,16,22.

is most important in counteracting any prejudices which an audience might hold or develop in the course of an oration. As a device it is intended to dissipate ill-will and weaken an opponent's charges by calling them into doubt.¹⁹

Other factors which could influence the type and construction of the *exordium* were also acknowledged, such as the perceived character of the speaker (*ἦθος*) or external circumstances (such as a tired or bored audience). The *ethos* of the orator was considered to be of the greatest importance for successful persuasion. Aristotle claimed that "...moral character...constitutes the most effective means of proof".²⁰ Quintilian concurred: "...if he is believed to be a good man, this consideration will exercise the strongest influence at every point of the case".²¹

More time and more effort are necessary to prepare an audience if they are unacquainted with the topics under discussion or if they are not favorably disposed toward the orator or his point of view. A case which is obscure or difficult to comprehend, or an audience which is bored, weary, inattentive, hostile to the speaker or his cause, or which does not attach enough importance to the subject (in the orator's opinion) calls for an *exordium* to remedy the situation.²² Therefore it

¹⁹*RhetAlex* 29,1436b: "Anticipation is the method by which you anticipate the objections that can be advanced against your arguments and sweep them aside. You must minimize the other party's arguments and amplify your own...[by means of] amplifications. You must set one argument against the other...contrasting them in all possible ways, amplifying your own and making those of your opponents weak and trifling." Cf. *RhetAlex* 18,1432b,11ff.

²⁰*ArRhet* 1,2,3-4.

²¹*InstOr* 4,1,7 ...*plurimum tamen ad omnia momenti est in hoc positum, si vir bonus creditur.*

²²*ArRhet* 3,14,12; *InstOr* 4,1,72.

is not unusual that the length of the *exordium* should reflect the difficulty of the task of persuasion as perceived by the orator.

Classical rhetoricians recognized that the moral nature of a cause influences the type of *exordium* used and its construction.²³ Generally speaking, five classes of causes (σχήματα ὑποθέσεων, *figurae materialium*, *figurae controversiarum*) were recognized, reflecting the difficulties involved in persuading an audience.²⁴ The five cover a full spectrum, from cases which are relatively easy to those which are most difficult. They are:

- 1) the honorable (ἐνδοξον/*honestum*)
- 2) the ambiguous [or doubtful] (ἀμφίδοξον/*anceps, dubium*)
- 3) the obscure (δυσπαρακολούθητον/*obscurum*)
- 4) the petty [or mean] (ἄδοξον/*humile*)
- 5) the scandalous [or difficult or discreditable] (παράδοξον/*turpe, admirabile*)

An ambiguous or doubtful cause is one in which the case is considered by the audience as partly honorable and partly discreditable or when the point to be judged is doubtful.²⁵ In such cases it is considered especially important that the orator secure the goodwill (*benivolentia*) of his audience by means of a *principium* so that whatever is discreditable in the case may not prove prejudicial to it.²⁶

A case is considered obscure when either the audience is slow-witted or the

²³E.g. *AdHer* 1,3,5; *DeInv* 1,15,20; *InstOr* 4,1,40.

²⁴*AdHer* 1,3,5 lists only four kinds of cause, omitting the obscure; *InstOr* 4,1,40, mentions a possible sixth (the scandalous, *turpe*) which, however, is basically equivalent to either the petty (*humile*) or the extraordinary (*admirabile*).

²⁵*DeInv* 1,15,20.

²⁶*InstOr* 4,1,41; *AdHer* 1,4,6; *DeInv* 1,15,21.

subject includes matters which are complicated or difficult to understand.²⁷ In such cases it is most important that the orator in a *principium* should render his audience ready to receive instruction, receptive, teachable (*docile*).²⁸

A petty or mean case is one which is considered of little or no importance by the audience. It is perceived of as being unworthy of serious attention. In such a case it is necessary in the *principium* that the orator excite his audience to attention (*attentus*) by somehow removing their disdain and persuading them of the true majesty of the subject.²⁹

The scandalous cause is by far the most difficult for an orator to deal with effectively. By its very nature it alienates the audience and offends their values and beliefs. Such a cause prejudices the minds of the audience and diverts their attention away from the real issue for judgement by its sensational character. In such cases the orator must sooth the audience's hysteria, disarm their prejudices, and direct their attention to the real issue for judgement. A *principium* is usually not possible so an *insinuatio* may be necessary. A *principium* may be used to try to gain the audience's goodwill if they are not completely hostile or if an effective attack can be made against one's adversaries, otherwise insinuation is recommended.³⁰

An honorable cause—like that of Colossians—is the easiest to defend, recommend, or praise. It has the approval and favor of the audience even before the

²⁷*DeInv* 1,5,21.

²⁸*InstOr* 4,1,41.

²⁹*DeInv* 1,15,21.

³⁰*DeInv* 1,15,21; *AdHer* 1,4,6.

oration is given. The very nature of the case is considered right and honorable by the audience, for example to praise one who is already considered a hero or to prosecute one who is accused of murder. It should be pointed out that what is honorable (or for that matter petty or scandalous) is dependent to a great degree upon the values and customs of the audience.³¹

When a cause is honorable the orator may use a *principium* to reinforce the audience's goodwill (*benivolentia*), though he often need not employ any *exordium* at all. Cicero writes,

When, however, the case is really in the honorable class, it will be possible either to pass over the introduction or, if it is convenient, we shall begin with the narrative or with a law or some very strong argument which supports our plea: if, on the contrary, it is desirable to use the introduction, we must use the topics designed to produce good-will, that the advantage which already exists may be increased.³²

Having considered classical rhetorical teachings on *exordia* we may now return to our examination of the prescript and *prooimium* of Colossians, applying these theories to the text.

The *causa* of Colossians is honorable (*honestum*, ἔνδοξον) in the eyes of

³¹*InstOr* 3,7,24-25: "Among some races the life of a freebooter is accounted honorable, while others regard it as a duty to respect the laws. Frugality might perhaps be unpopular with the Sybarites, whilst luxury was regarded as a crime by the ancient Romans. Similar differences of opinion are found in individuals. A judge is most favorable to the orator whose views he thinks identical with his own." (*Rapto vivere quibusdam honestum, aliis cura legum. Frugalitas apud Sybaritas forsitan odio foret, veteribus Romanis summum luxuria crimen. Eadem in singulis differentia. Maxime favet iudex, qui sibi dicentem assentiri putat.*) Cf. *ArRhet* 1,9,30.

³²*DeInv* 1,15,21: *Cum autem erit honestum causae genus, vel praeteriri principium poterit vel, si commodum fuerit, aut a narratione incipiemus aut a lege aut ab aliqua firmissima ratione nostrae dictionis; sin uti principio placebit, benivolentiae partibus utendum est, ut id quod est augeatur.* Cf. *AdHer* 1,4,6; *RhetAlex* 29,1437b,35.

both Paul and his readers, although it may appear that their views as to what is honorable diverge at certain points. These possible points of divergence concern knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις), or doctrine, and appropriate behavior for Christians. Paul and his audience may disagree about some of the content of this knowledge or about the behavior which it should foster. On the other hand, his teachings and commands later in the epistle build upon the values of the Colossian congregation and serve more to remind, confirm, and encourage his hearers than to challenge them. Points of agreement between the author and audience are stressed rather than points of disagreement. Nor does the orator sense a great need to alter the soul of his audience. His *principium* confirms the audience's goodwill and omits any lengthy attempt to produce in them attentiveness or receptivity; these are practically assumed to exist.

The author immediately begins his discourse with a complex ethical figure³³ drawn from his own person.³⁴ *Ethos* vigorously expressed produces *pathos*. He introduces himself to his audience by his name, Παῦλος. This is followed directly by the epithet ἀπόστολος which is itself described by the genitive phrase Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ and the prepositional phrase διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ. Each of these elements

³³It should be noted that there is always a certain amount of ambiguity regarding the identification of figures. In some cases more than one term is available to describe a figure; in other cases one term is used differently by different authors. In addition a word or group of words may form more than one device so that several (even conflicting) interpretations are often possible. "The ancient rhetoricians differ sometimes greatly, sometimes slightly, in their definitions of figures, which became excessively numerous as refinements were made in distinguishing them. The line of demarcation between tropes and figures, and that between figures of thought and figures of diction were often vague." Caplan's footnote, p.275 of *AdHer*; see *InstOr* 9,1,1ff.

³⁴*DelInv* 1,16,22; *PartOr* 8,28; *AdHer* 1,4,8-1,5,8; *InstOr* 4,1,7-10,33.

serves to establish and strengthen the writer's respectability and authority which in turn act as powerful forces for producing good-will, attention, and receptivity in the audience who presumably concur with the author's self-description.

Although Paul did not found the congregation in Colossae (1:7) and is not personally known to them (2:1), they know of him and apparently accept his apostleship since nowhere in the epistle is the need to defend his apostleship demonstrated (in contrast to Galatians and 2 Corinthians). As an apostle, he is acknowledged as occupying a position of authority in the Church and as having a duty or office to accomplish. The phrases *Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ* and *διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ* point to the origin and authority of his office. Here is the divine source and sanction of his ministry. He is not an apostle by his own ambition or because of human election as some of his opponents were suggesting. His authority does not rest in or derive from himself or the elders of the Church, it derives from God who has granted it by his will. From God he has received authority to preach the Gospel as well as to teach and discipline the Church. Knowing this, his audience will not receive his letter as they would any other. It is special. It is authoritative. It is to be believed and obeyed.

This conforms to Quintilian's advice that the orator should state that he is acting not on his own behalf, but on behalf of a friend, or out of duty, compulsion, or some serious moral consideration.³⁵ His apostleship is a benefit to his hearers, as it is a channel of grace and blessing and wisdom between God and the

³⁵*InstOr* 4,1,7; see also *PartOr* 8,28.

Colossians. And by identifying himself as an apostle by the will of God he ensures the attention and receptivity of his audience, since it is then anticipated that he will speak concerning "the worship of the immortal gods".³⁶

It is unclear whether the mention of Timothy has any rhetorical significance. Apparently he was not personally known to the Colossians since no further reference is made to him throughout the epistle and since he is not mentioned among those sending personal greetings in chapter 4. Perhaps it was thought that the epistle would be endowed with greater authority if it were confirmed by two witnesses.³⁷ Probably the Colossians had heard of Timothy and knew of his high reputation with Paul and other churches in Asia. Paul clearly identifies himself with Timothy by means of the *epithet* ἀδελφός. Perhaps he is mentioned only because he was Paul's co-worker and heir-apparent. Or perhaps for some unstated reason Paul wishes to promote Timothy among the Colossians and the neighboring congregations and so ties him so closely to himself.

This short initial introductory phrase establishes powerfully the persuasive ethical appeal of the author on behalf of his oration. The ethical appeal is the most effective form of persuasion,³⁸ and divine authority can be the most powerful form of the ethical appeal. The divine is true, powerful, inescapable. There exists no

³⁶*AdHer* 1,5,8; also see *InstOr* 10,1,48.

³⁷E.g. Deut. 19:15; 2Cor. 13:1.

³⁸*ArRhet* 1,2,3-4; 3,14,7; *InstOr* 4,1,7.

higher appeal. Therefore to ignore or flaunt it risks the most serious consequences. This exerts a strong influence upon the audience to accept and respond to the Apostle's words. Paul's name alone, not to mention his divinely given apostleship to the Gentiles, should fulfill the rhetorical demands for creating a receptive audience by making them attentive. The audience will sit up and take note, with hearts eager to listen and learn, at a message from God's representative and apostle. The author is gently confirming the attention and readiness to receive instruction which already exist in his audience.

Quintilian advised:

We shall win good-will from our own person if we refer to our own acts and services without arrogance; if we weaken the effect of charges that have been preferred, or of some suspicion of less honorable dealing which has been cast upon us; if we dilate on the misfortunes which have befallen us or the difficulties which still beset us; if we use prayers and entreaties with a humble and submissive spirit.³⁹

Paul's apostleship is a beneficial office and service. There is no need for the apostle to counter any charges against himself. His character throughout is portrayed (assumed) as blameless. His *ethos* pervades the entire epistle.

In 1:2a the author's ethical appeal turns from a discussion of his person to a discussion of the audience themselves:⁴⁰ τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ. The address to the church at Colossae (τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς)

³⁹*DeInv* 1,16,22: *Ab nostra, si de nostris factis et officiis sine arrogantia dicemus, si crimina illata et aliquas minus honestas suspensiones iniectas diluamus; si, quae incommoda acciderint aut quae instent difficultates, proferemus; si prece et obsecratione humili ac supplici utemur.*

⁴⁰*AdHer* 1,5,8; *InstOr* 4,1,16ff.

promotes an attentive and well-disposed audience since it is a manner of promising to discuss what appertains to the audience. An audience is more likely to listen to one who is seen as interested in their own good; and this in turn further develops the Apostle's *ethos*.⁴¹

The address is amplified by the addition of several epithets (amplification by threefold accumulation). Good-will and positive *pathos* may be aroused in an audience by speaking well of them, even by flattering them, though not to excess.⁴² The audience is addressed as ἁγίοις—saints or, perhaps better, holy [brothers] (modifying ἀδελφοίς in conjunction with πιστοίς)—those set apart for God, his chosen people, the New Israel, those called to live a special lifestyle. This is Paul's usual term for Christians. It may describe the audience's conduct or their position in Christ. They are further called πιστοίς ἀδελφοίς—faithful or believing brothers. The epithet expresses both their quality of character with reference to the gospel (obedient and/or believing) and their position in relation to the orator. In this phrase the author identifies himself with the audience, thereby tying their praise to his cause, a tactic Quintilian recommends for obtaining the good will of the audience.⁴³ By designating his readers as "brothers" the author places himself on common ground with his audience, thereby displaying his own modesty and avoiding any charge of arrogance which might be incurred from his high position

⁴¹*DelInv* 1,16,22; *AdHer* 1,5,8.

⁴²*DelInv* 1,16,22; *AdHer* 1,4,8.

⁴³*InstOr* 4,1,16.

declared in v.1.⁴⁴ This also raises the standing of the audience, identifying it with that of his own, the Apostle chosen by God.⁴⁵ Both of these factors increase the orator's *ethos* since they intensify the audience's conception of him as a good man, as one who is concerned for them and not out for personal gain or glory.⁴⁶ The final epithet consists of the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ. This again signifies their position in typical Pauline jargon and further binds them with the author and his cause. All of these epithets would be considered very positive in the value judgements of both the author and his audience.

Following the amplified address to the church at Colossae, Paul in typical fashion places a salutation in 1:2b: χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν. This is a blessing expressed passively. It is a figure of *pathos* which elicits good will and a positive emotional response to the author, thus consequently enforcing his *ethos*, by showing the love and high regard he has for his audience.⁴⁷ It is natural that such displays of affection often create positive feelings towards the one making them, showing that he is a caring and loving benefactor.⁴⁸

However, these points should not be overemphasized since the prescript might elicit less notice from the audience if they perceived it as a standard introductory formula.

⁴⁴*DeInv* 1,16,22; *InstOr* 4,1,10.

⁴⁵*DeInv* 1,16,22; *AdHer* 1,5,8.

⁴⁶*ArRhet* 1,2,3f; 3,14,7; *DeInv* 1,16,22; *AdHer* 1,5,8; *InstOr* 4,1,8; Augustine, *DeDocChr* 4,27.

⁴⁷*InstOr* 4,1,33; 8,4,26-27.

⁴⁸See *DeInv* 1,16,22.

Topics appear in the prescript which will later be developed in the *argumentatio* and elsewhere in the epistle.⁴⁹ The epithets applied to the recipients in 1:2 are linked to the furtherance of the case, since, as seen above in Chapter three, it is the Apostle's objective (the *stasis* of the document) to instruct his audience more fully in the faith so that they may live in faithful obedience and holiness in the Lord. For example, this is seen in 1:10ff in the proposition where Paul states his desire that the Colossians walk worthy of the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work, being strengthened so that they may persevere. Again in 1:22-23 he reminds his hearers how Christ died in order to present them holy and spotless in God's sight, if they continue in the faith. And all of chapter 3 is dedicated to instruction in holy and faithful living in Christ. The theme of holiness also acts to bind the orator with his audience since this is (presumably) a shared objective of both parties.

The mention of Christ and God the Father in the prescript foreshadows their centrality throughout the document, particularly in the panegyric section of 1:12bff.

The use of amplification by accumulation which occurs in the prescript is a stylistic device which will appear frequently throughout the epistle. It consists in the piling up of different words or ideas in order to create in the audience an impression of greater quantity or quality.⁵⁰ In 1:1-2 it is used in ethical and pathetic figures for the enhancement of audience good will, attention, and receptivity.

⁴⁹*ArRhet* 3,19,1 and 4-6; *DeInv* 1,52; *DeOr* 2,80,325; *AdHer* 2,30,47; *InstOr* 4,1,23-26 and 6,1,1-8.

⁵⁰*InstOr* 8,4,26f.

The characterization of the audience in theological terms is part of the epistle's style and acts to establish common ground between the orator and his hearers as well as to increase their positive *pathos*.⁵¹

The religious theme visible in the prescript is apparent throughout the entire letter, promoting attention and receptivity by its concern for the divine.

His praise for his audience may also be a subtle method of encouraging them to the very virtues for which he praises them. "Since you are holy and faithful, you will respond to my teaching, since to do otherwise would be contradictory to holiness and faithfulness." Or this might be a subliminal or ironical statement. It could imply that some of the Christians at Colossae were being neither holy nor faithful. Or it might be used to produce holy behavior in the Colossians through suggestion or expectation. Certainly throughout the epistle the writer is concerned with fitting behavior.

There are powerful ingredients throughout the epistle to create and maintain an attentive audience, though nowhere is there a direct appeal to pay attention or an enumeration of the speech's parts.

So we see that in 1:1 the author identifies himself with God, that is, with the cause of God. He is on God's side. He is a special servant of God. And in 1:2 he

⁵¹See *DeOr* 2,77,311; *PartOr* 8,27.

assumes identity with his audience. They are united as brothers, as individuals who have the same values and seek the same goals. In reminding and confirming his audience in his special calling and their mutual goals, the author is drawing his audience on to his side and leading them along the course of his argumentation. They are now with him in sentiment and heart. This produces a situation where the audience will be loath to disagree with or offend the one to whom they are emotionally and spiritually attached. They will want to maintain the positive relationship and the values and teachings of the community which the Apostle pronounces and signifies. His cause will become their cause. His enemies will become their enemies. His beliefs will become their beliefs. To oppose the Apostle is thus a shameful act. To do so one risks becoming ostracized not only from the Apostle himself, but also from God, whom he represents, and from the rest of the community (so long as they continue in one spirit with the Apostle).

The prescript was included only because it was necessitated by the epistolary medium. In spite of this the author has masterfully crafted it into a brief but rhetorically relevant element of the entire discourse. In the prescript Paul simply introduces himself and Timothy, stating his position, then names his addressees, stating their position, and finally blesses them. As noted, the author does amplify slightly the elements of the prescript in a productive and thoughtful manner. His words are not without purpose as the rest of the discourse demonstrates, but his amplification is minimal.

IV.A.2. The *Exordium* Proper (1:3-9a)

Following the prescript, at the very outset of the body of the epistle the audience is theoretically ready to receive immediately the deliberative message of the Apostle since his *causa* is honorable and he is perceived as a credible speaker. But from a practical point of view that would be too abrupt. Furthermore, although no initial rhetorical problems of magnitude exist which must first be removed before Paul can begin, the rhetorical problem that he does not personally know his audience remains, though this is not portrayed as a major obstacle.⁵² Therefore, wisely, he does not now in 1:3 launch directly into his *propositio*. His compact introduction makes for a smoother oration.⁵³ First he feels he must set the stage for his audience. He will reveal in brief how it is that he has come to write to them, so he employs a short narrative *exordium* in 1:3-9a. His *exordium* is brief, yet casual and personal in its nature (as it narrates moments from the Apostle's life), thereby almost obscuring for the casual observer its functional importance in introducing the major themes of the epistle, narrating the events and motivations which inspired its writing, preparing the audience to give a positive hearing to the author's message, and providing a smooth entrance into the *propositio*. It is

⁵²The fact that Paul does not personally know his audience is not mentioned in the letter as a problem, and certainly from the content of the introduction it is not treated as a major problem (as might be expected). Perhaps this is both because Paul was well-known in reputation among all the churches of Asia and because the letter was to be delivered by two close companions who were being relied upon to fill in missing bits of information.

⁵³*InstOr* 3,8,6 and 10.

compact, clear, and effective in spite of being structurally complex and thematically rich.

As noted, for a deliberative discourse there is no intrinsic need for an introduction,⁵⁴ and the author of Colossians has almost dispensed with an *exordium*. Its brevity and directness reveal that it is of the form known as the *principium* rather than the *insinuatio*. A *principium* is a direct appeal to the goodwill, attention, and receptivity of the audience.⁵⁵ It is the usual and sufficient form of introduction for most every kind of cause. In causes where the audience is in some way alienated by the orator or his subject, or if they have become tired or have already been won over by the opposition, they may be so inattentive, hostile, or prejudiced that the subtle and indirect *insinuatio* is needed.⁵⁶ However, this is clearly not the case for Colossians. Its cause is honorable. The audience is attentive and well-disposed. At the least, the brevity of Paul's introduction indicates that he assumes his audience already to be attentive to what he has to say, well-disposed to him as speaker, hostile neither to him nor to his objective, and capable of comprehending the subject matter. Because the audience is already closely aligned with him, he can move rapidly into his proposition without energetic attempts to win

⁵⁴*ArRhet* 3,14,8; *PartOr* 4,13.

⁵⁵*InstOr* 4,1,42.

⁵⁶*DeInv* 1,15,20: "Insinuation is an address which by dissimulation and indirection unobtrusively steals into the mind of the auditor" (*Insinuatio est oratio quadam dissimulatione et circumitione obscure subiens auditoris animum*); cf. *AdHer* 1,6,9.

their good-will or receptivity.⁵⁷ The amplification which is used in the *principium* is meant to confirm and advance the good-will, attention, and receptivity already present in the audience. Immediately following his modest introduction Paul, in 1:9b, launches into his *propositio*.

As noted, the *principium* of 1:3-9a possesses certain characteristics of a *narratio* or διήγησις. This *narratio*-like section is not a proper legal διήγησις (which indirectly supports the claim that the epistle is not of the judicial genus). It is more informal, more personal. It is short and selective. Its setting is the prayer of Paul and his co-workers. Aristotle's πρόθεσις, which he considered an essential part of every oration, was in essence equivalent only to the proposition which the speaker would state and then attempt to prove in his πίστις. The διήγησις or narration proper was an extended form of the πρόθεσις. The διήγησις consisted in an account of the background events leading up to the case at hand and would be

⁵⁷ The *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 29,1436b counsels that one must determine the audience's disposition before speaking. If they are friendly you need only remind them of their goodwill. If they are neutral you should tell them that it is right to give you a favorable hearing, flatter their ability to make good and sound judgements, and employ self-depreciation. However, if they are prejudiced against you or your topic or your speech other tactics must be employed. If they are prejudiced against you, you must anticipate this and speak briefly in your own defense and claim that what you have to say is just and expedient. If they are prejudiced against your topic, you must again anticipate this and attempt to shift any sense of blame away from the subject to such things as necessity, fortune, expediency, or the unavoidable circumstances which constitute the case. An audience may also be prejudiced against your speech because they anticipate it will be too long, or that your position is out of fashion or unconvincing. If it is to be long, blame must be shifted to the multiplicity of facts and complexity of the case. If the audience perceive your proposal is out of fashion, you must state that you will prove its appropriateness for the present circumstances. And if it is seen as unconvincing, you must promise to prove the truth of your statements in the course of your speech. None of these "excuses" appears anywhere in the *principium* of Colossians which provides strong evidence of the assumption that the audience is attentive and well-disposed toward the author and his *causa*.

followed directly by the proposition. Such a preliminary summary might be helpful in some cases, but was not essential according to Aristotle.

Thus an alternative possibility to the previously proposed rhetorical outline would be to see 1:3-9a not as an *exordium* but as a *διήγησις* functioning as part of an extended *πρόθεσις* (*narratio*) running from 1:3-12a, with 1:9b-12a acting as the *πρόθεσις* proper (*propositio/declaratio*). In such a case 1:1-2 could function not only as an epistolary prescript, but also as a sort of semi-*προοίμιον* (*exordium/principium*).

A more radical alternative would be to view 1:4-2:5 as a *declaratio*. This would begin with a first narration in 1:4-9a followed by the first statement of the proposition in 1:9b-12a. 1:12b-1:22 would be seen as a digression rather than as a proof. This would then be followed by a second *narratio* and second statement of the *propositio* which would themselves be followed by a second digression from 1:23b-2:1, again instead of seeing this section as a proof. This would be followed by a third statement of the proposition which would lead into the *argumentatio* in 2:6-4:6. The case for such an outline can be strengthened if one interprets 2:6-4:6 as the only "authentic" argumentation due to the presence there of both confirmation and refutation.

Such an alternative would be outlined as follows:

1:4-2:5 *declaratio*

1:4-1:9a *narratio* 1

1:3-8 *encomium* for the Colossians

1:5-6 *encomium* for the gospel

1:7-8 *encomium* for Epaphras

(1:9a transitional clause)

- 1:9b-1:12a *propositio* 1
 (1:12a transitional clause)
 1:12b-1:22 *digressio* 1: on Christ and the Father
 (1:21-22 transitional phrase)
 1:21-22 *narratio* 2
 1:23a *propositio* 2
 (1:23b transitional clause)
 1:23b-2:1 *digressio* 2: on Paul
 2:2-5 *propositio* 3
 (2:4-5 transitional statements)

Although this hypothesis is plausible, it does not sufficiently account for the proof-like nature of 1:12b-2:1. Furthermore, it should be remembered that it is not necessary for authentic argumentation to consist of both positive confirmation and negative refutation.

But let us now return to the narrational traits of the *principium* of 1:3-9a which recounts events prior to the writing of the epistle.⁵⁸ The ancient rhetoricians recommended that every narration of events should possess three qualities: 1) brevity (*συντομία*, *brevitas*), which is attained by including only materials essential to the cause; 2) clarity (*σαφήνεια*, *perspicuitas*), which is attained by brevity as well as by a precise ordering of materials while avoiding archaic or ambiguous words and constructions; and 3) plausibility (*πιθανότης*, *verisimilitudo*), which is attained by conforming the material of the narration to that which is natural or expected by the audience.⁵⁹ The narration should also seek to be persuasive, not

⁵⁸Actually, it is common for Paul's thanksgivings to combine liturgical material with a simultaneous statement of his audience's situation. Cf. Schubert, *Form and Function*, 183-184.

⁵⁹*ArRhet* 3,16; *InstOr* 4,2,31ff; *DeOr* 2,80,325; *PartOr* 9,31-32; *DeInv* 1,20,28; *AdHer* 1,9,14. These three qualities have been recommended for narrations at least since Isocrates. Cicero (*PartOr* 9,32) advised a fourth quality, namely charm (*suavitas*).

According to the author of the *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* (1,8,12), there are three types of narrations: those which are totally directed towards victory in causes where a decision is to be

merely instructive.⁶⁰ As will be shown in more detail later, all of these qualities are evident in the *exordium* of Colossians. Aristotle, however, insisted that such narration (*διήγησις*) is usually only necessary in judicial discourses.⁶¹ But in Colossians, as a deliberative discourse, the appearance of narrative qualities in the *exordium* should probably be attributed to the author's need to reveal his motivation for writing an apparently unrequested letter to recipients he was personally unacquainted with; a situation which demands at least a brief discussion of the background to the letter.

None of the rhetorical commentators mentions the narrational character of this introduction. Melanchthon divides his *exordium* into two *loci communes*: the first on thanksgiving (1:3-8), the second on prayer (1:9-11). His commentary on the first *locus* is entirely taken up by a discussion regarding the relationship of love to hope.⁶² His second *locus*, as already stated, is in this study regarded as the

rendered (*διηγήσεις ἐπὶ κριτῶν λεγόμεναι*); those which are directed towards winning belief for a cause or for incriminating an opponent (known as incidental narratives, *διαβολή, παραδιήγησις*); and those which are solely used in oratorical practice exercises (*διηγήσεις καθ' ἑαυτάς*). If the narrative qualities of the *principium* of Colossians can be assigned to any of these types it would seem to be to the second since the introduction plays merely an ancillary role to the proposition and argumentation.

⁶⁰*InstOr* 4,2,21: "For the purpose of the statement of facts is not merely to instruct, but rather to persuade the judge" (*Neque enim narratio in hoc reperta est, ut tantum cognoscat iudex, sed aliquanto magis, ut consentiat*).

⁶¹*ArRhet* 3,13,3. According to Cicero, who was most interested in defining judicial rhetoric, "the narrative is an exposition of events that have occurred or are supposed to have occurred," *DeInv* 1,19,27: *Narratio est rerum gestarum aut ut gestarum expositio*. However, epideictic or deliberative rhetoric can just as easily contain a *narratio* which deals with present or even future (anticipated) events. Cf. *AdHer* 1,3,4.

⁶²Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 32-34.

propositio. According to Hatfield,⁶³ Paul's *exordium* includes greetings (1:1-2), a prayer of thanksgiving (1:3-8), and a prayer of petition (1:9-14). For Hatfield, Paul is simply introducing a prelude before he begins his attack against the Colossian heresy in the doctrinal section of the epistle: the two prayers pave the way for a positive response to his message by employing *ethos* and *pathos*. Aletti properly identifies this section not as a prayer of thanksgiving, but as the report of a prayer of thanksgiving (although within a larger *exordium*, 1:3-23).⁶⁴ Unfortunately, however, he does not draw from this any conclusion that this passage has a narrative function. Van der Watt⁶⁵ identifies an Aristotelian *exordium* in 1:3-12 which he divides into the reason and motivation for Paul's prayer (1:4-8) and the prayer itself (1:9-12).

The *principium's* narrational function of briefly recounting the course of events preceding the writing of the epistle is only one of the rhetorical qualities of this literarily complex passage. The section actually consists in an *encomium* for the Colossians (1:3-8) which itself includes two brief *encomia*: one in praise of the gospel in 1:5-6, and one in praise of Epaphras in 1:7-8.

So already in the *exordium* we encounter the first use of epideictic in this

⁶³Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 182ff.

⁶⁴Aletti, *Colossiens*, 54.

⁶⁵J.G. van der Watt, "Colossians 1:3-12 Considered as an Exordium," *JThSoAfrica* 57 (1986), 32-42; subsequently van der Watt, "Exordium".

deliberative discourse.⁶⁶ Although the original purpose of epideictic was entertainment, it later came to be seen as being useful in education and already by the time of the writing of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* it was recognized that epideictic had a role to play in the other two *genera*.⁶⁷ Here and throughout Colossians it quite clearly plays a supporting role in accomplishing a deliberative goal. According to Quintilian, although epideictic was usually directed to the praise of gods or men, it might also be employed in the praise of animals or inanimate objects.⁶⁸ Although at this point in Colossians we find it used in praising both human beings (the Colossians and Epaphras) and an inanimate object (the gospel), later in chapter one it is used in describing God the Father and the more than human Christ.

In turning now to a closer examination of the text, we discover that while being an integral part of the *principium*, 1:3 also serves as a transitional phrase between the prescript and introduction and itself possesses narrative functions. It is a small step from the prayer-like blessing in v.2 (χάρις ὑμῖν...) to the report of thanksgiving and prayer in v.3 (εὐχαριστοῦμεν...προσευχόμενοι). 1:3 fits almost as well in the prescript as in the *principium*.

⁶⁶The classical survey of epideictic is that of Burgess, *Epideictic*; cf. Kennedy *Art of Rhetoric*, 21-23; Lausberg, H. *Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1963), 18-19; and his *Handbuch*, 129-138; Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 177-210.

⁶⁷"The materials for amplification are useful in the other species of oratory as well" *RhetAlex* 3,1426b.

⁶⁸*InstOr* 3,7,6.

A variation of the rhetorical device of optation⁶⁹ occurs in 1:3ff (and also in 1:9ff). Repetition, in this case of the mention of prayer in 1:3 (περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι) and 1:9a (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι), is a typical technique of oral communication for emphasis.⁷⁰ Listeners catch repeated words. Here it acts as a form of *inclusio*: the prayer motif surrounds and encapsulates the *principium*, clarifying its boundaries. It both serves as a means to enter the *principium* in 1:3 and to close off that section in 1:9a. In addition, the repetition of the mention of prayer in 1:9a is intended to act as a notation of transition from the *exordium* to the proposition. It catches the hearers' attention, directing their minds to turn now from the introduction and causing them to focus on the *propositio* which is a crucial and essential part of the speech. The audience will follow this signal.

In 1:3 the author uses *hyperbole* in a positive overstatement of feeling: εὐχαριστοῦμεν...πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι. Whether or not he and his associates do actually give thanks to God every time they pray for the Colossian Christians is neither verifiable nor important in determining the impact of this text upon his audience. What matters for our purposes is the intensity of emotive power (*pathos*) bound up within the statement.

Now thankfulness may be defined as an active emotion characterized by a certain joy and happiness towards the source of a gift on account of the receipt of

⁶⁹Optation is technically the use of a prayer, whereas here in Colossians we find the use of the report of the substance of a prayer. See *DeOr* 3,205.

⁷⁰It is interesting to note that certain texts (B,D*,F,G,33,104,pc) actually record ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι in both 1:3 and 9a, a reading which the rhetorical use of *inclusio* could theoretically be used to support.

that gift. Joy is created because either a felt need has been met, thus shifting the balance of the $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ from a sensation of lack (deficit) to one of sufficiency (surplus), or because some unsought-after good has been experienced. The sensation of sufficiency and the experience of good are themselves characterized by feelings of confidence, power, safety, warmth, worth, love, etc. which intoxicate the mind with a joy which wells up and overflows in gratitude toward the person or object responsible for bestowing such goodness.

This expression of thankfulness is likely to be interpreted by the audience as the result of joy and good-will, even love, towards them from Paul's heart. It also points to a certain connection or unity between Paul and his audience—the unity of brotherhood in Christ—in spite of the fact that they do not know each other personally. This spiritual unity and good-will are effected by the audience's status and behavior which are presented here as conforming to the ethical standards and shared beliefs of the Pauline church community. This phrase also fortifies the ethical appeal (*ethos*) of the orator by promoting his character as a righteous, pious, and loving man who has the best interests of his audience at heart. He is a man of much prayer and can rejoice before God. He, the chosen Apostle, intercedes before God on behalf of his hearers. Therefore, this statement is likely to produce the emotional response of good-will towards the author within the audience, as well as to strengthen their respect for him and attentiveness to his message.

Having bolstered the positive estimation of his *ethos* in the minds of his readers by means of a description centered upon the actions and attitudes of his own

person in the transitional phrase of 1:3 (which moves us out of the prescript and into the *principium*), the author now constructs as an introduction a very brief narration of the events which have lead up to his writing. Considering the line he takes later in his proof, it would appear that this narrative, though perhaps true in as far as its description goes, is purposely one-sided in its emphasis upon the positive. Not the slightest hint of trouble, failure, or doubt can be found here. E.F.Scott wrote in his commentary on the epistle, concerning its first eight verses, "Epaphras had told him other things about them, not so favorable; but for the present he only dwells on the bright features in the report."⁷¹ The Apostle seems to be going out of his way to reinforce his audience's goodwill and to allay any doubts which may have crept into their minds concerning the authenticity of the gospel message they have received and the validity of their spiritual experience. Notice how Paul is careful to amplify in the *principium* both the *ethos* of Epaphras, the message bearer, and that of the message itself.⁷²

The *principium* tightly intertwines three brief and powerful encomiastic constructions, one in praise of the Colossians themselves, one in praise of Epaphras,

⁷¹Scott, E.F. *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians* (MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 16.

⁷²Van der Watt ("Exordium", 34ff.) has properly identified the personal reference of the letter (i.e., the concern shown for the audience) and the positive description of Epaphras as means of securing the attention and good-will of the audience. The audience is made to feel personally involved. He also points out that the *exordium* describes the Colossians' situation (a hint perhaps at its narrational quality?). But according to van der Watt the positive spirit of these first verses is a cover for the tough objective he is to deal with later, namely, his attack on the heresy. If this is indeed the case, then the *prooimium* should be classified not as an *exordium* but as an *insinatio*, a point which van der Watt seems to overlook. Moreover, such a conclusion would imply an element of deceit (if even only when motivated by politeness) throughout the epistle. Van der Watt could perhaps provide a reasonable defense of his case were he to carry out a rhetorical analysis upon the entire document, but as he desists at 1:12 we are left with little proof for this claim.

and one in praise of the gospel. The act of narration, of reminding the audience of the historical events which have precipitated the oration, is kept brief. Only the most basic and essential facts are included and these are presented in an extremely positive and palatable form in order simultaneously to fortify audience good will, attentiveness, and receptivity. These *encomia* seem to be aimed at reconfirming to the audience the correctness of the Christianity they have come to believe and to follow. There is no need or lack mentioned which would have to be filled by some other philosophy, tradition, or teaching. Already here the author is preparing his audience for his *argumentatio*.

With regard to the *exordium*'s encomiastic structure, the main concern of epideictic (ἐπιδεικτικόν/*demonstrativum*, *laudativum*) is, of course, praise (ἔπαινος/*laus*) and/or blame (ψόγος/*vituperatio*).⁷³ It was universally recognized that the end of the epideictic *genus* is the honorable or the dishonorable (τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ αἰσχρόν/*honestum et turpe*), and to this end all other considerations (including justice and injustice, expedience and harmfulness) are subordinate and subservient, being merely accessories to this end.⁷⁴ This end (τέλος/*officium*) is best accomplished by amplification (αὔξησις) and comparison (παραβολή). These

⁷³This conception of epideictic is seen throughout Hellenistic and Roman oratory: *RhetAlex* 3,1425b,35; *ArRhet* 1,3,5; *AdHer* 1,2,2; *DeInv* 1,5,7; 2,4,12; *PartOr* 21,70; *InstOr* 3,4,6-9 and 12-14; cf. *DeInv* 2,59,177; *DeOr* 1,31,141.

⁷⁴*ArRhet* 1,3,5; *RhetAlex* 3,1425b,36-39; *DeInv* 2,4,12; 2,51,155-156; *Topica* 24,91; *AdHer* 3,6,10; *InstOr* 3,4,16.

are the main tools to be used by the orator to make epideictic effective.⁷⁵ Amplification is, as the term implies, a magnification (or conversely, a minimization) or exaggeration of some quality or action. In one sense, all epideictic is amplification, and even comparison is a form of amplification since it magnifies the characteristics of one matter by setting it beside another of the same kind. Therefore, all epideictic is accomplished through amplification, and comparison is the most useful and most ubiquitous form of amplification.

In practice, in the praise of men or gods, amplification may be accomplished by noting and describing the results of the subject's actions. His deeds will testify for him. His actions and qualities of mind, body, and soul will be magnified when they are compared to others of the same or a similar type which are less or the least of their kind. Emphasizing the intent and conscious action of the subject magnifies his greatness, rather than portraying him as compelled by necessity or accomplishing by accident. Amplification may also be performed by stacking one description or attribute upon another so that effect is increased by sheer numbers. Another method is the citing of other sources or judgements in agreement with your objective and then showing that these are insufficient, or the citing of contrary judgements and then weakening or destroying their claims. Such actions make your own case appear stronger. To summarize, amplification consists of whatever makes for a bigger show

⁷⁵Burgess, *Epideictic*, 105; *InstOr*, 3,7,6. Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 55: "In der *inventio* dieses *genus* liegt der Schwerpunkt auf der *amplificatio*, die in der *elocutio* durch den *ornatus* unterstützt wird (Quint. 3,7,6 *proprium laudis est res amplificare et ornare*; Ar.rhet. 1,9,40)."

and creates a greater effect in the audience.⁷⁶ Some, though not all, of these elements are present in the epideictic of the *exordium* of Colossians.

In presenting an epideictic discourse the orator should take into account a number of factors arising from the audience which can influence the speech's effectiveness.⁷⁷ The reception of the speech is directly dependent upon the audience's attitude and beliefs. What the orator praises or blames must be in accord with what the audience believes is worthy of praise or blame, or at least must be made to appear so. This may involve persuading the audience to alter its system of values. For this reason the orator should know beforehand what the attitudes and values of his audience are. It is recommended as well that the orator include some praise for his audience in order to secure their good will towards his case. And the very ambiguity of virtue and vice can play into the orator's hands. That is to say, qualities and actions should be named according to the desired effect; in this way impulsiveness can be termed either rashness or decisiveness, careful watch over money can be called either thrift or meanness, liberalness with wealth can be said to be either generosity or waste, and so on.

In his *encomium* for the Colossians (1:3-8) Paul, as to be expected, centers his praise for his audience around their deeds which began in the past but are continuing into the present. He tells how they heard the gospel from God's messenger, Epaphras, accepted it as a true message, and subsequently acted in

⁷⁶Cf. *RhetAlex* 3,1426a,20ff.

⁷⁷*InstOr* 3,7,23-25.

obedience to its authority. Their stated praiseworthy actions include the particularly Christian virtues of faith (in Christ/the gospel), hope (in his/its promised reward), and love (in the Spirit/for the saints). Less obviously, this is praise for their obedience to the message of the gospel, and the joy and thankfulness which their actions have created in Paul and his companions is no less a matter for the Colossians to take pride in. Their actions and experiences speak of their holy character and their sure status in Christ. Their association with Epaphras, a servant of the true gospel, is played upon. And their valuable possessions (the message of truth, fruits, growth) are listed.

In summary then, the author praises his audience for their virtuous deeds, their pure motivation, their associations with persons of virtue and events of powerful significance, and their rich possessions. Each of these are standard elements of classical epideictic form, the main contrast here being the thoroughly Christian content (the Christian virtues, the association with the movement of the Spirit and with Christian saints, the emphasis on spiritual possessions).

This encomiastic passage fulfills several rhetorical duties. As a good *exordium* should, it introduces in a rather straightforward way major topics of the *argumentatio* (including the truthfulness and sufficiency of the gospel and the fruit of good works which it is to produce). In addition, by praising the audience the author should secure their good-will for himself and his message and further strengthen his *ethos* (since his praise appears sincere, moderate, tasteful, and pious rather than flattering), and by discussing matters concerning the audience he

encourages their attentiveness. Furthermore, this passage serves to confirm and strengthen the common values and beliefs and the communal bond between Paul (and the greater circle of his followers) and the Colossian Christians (who were apparently in need of some encouragement), which in modern rhetorical theory is considered a basic function of the epideictic genus:

"The argumentation in epideictic discourse sets out to increase the intensity of adherence to certain values, which might not be contested when considered on their own but may nevertheless not prevail against other values that might come into conflict with them. The speaker tries to establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience and to this end he uses the whole range of means available to the rhetorician for purposes of amplification and enhancement."⁷⁸

In his second *encomium* (1:5-6), Paul praises the inanimate object of the gospel. This he accomplishes by lauding its contents, its consequences, and its character. Its contents consist of the abstracts "hope stored in heaven" and "the grace of God". "The grace of God" is evidently the message of divine forgiveness and reconciliation through Christ even for gentile sinners (cf. 1:21f., 2:13f.). The "hope stored in heaven" is apparently the promise that believers in Christ will receive a special "inheritance" or "reward" from God, although he leaves the content of this hope undefined. To describe its consequences, Paul nearly personifies the gospel. It is shown as actively coming to people. Next, agricultural imagery is used to describe its active production of "fruit" in people (probably love for the saints, faith, and hope) and its active "growth". Its power is swift in transforming lives (ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἡκούσατε). The threefold repetition of καθώς acts to join

⁷⁸Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 51; see also Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 74f.

together 1:5,6, and 7a into a cohesive unit which emphasizes the divine and mystical power at work in the gospel, bringing it to the Colossians and to all the world, producing through it "fruit" and "growth" wherever it goes. Actually what we have here is an occurrence of metonymy by substitution of the creation for the creator ("gospel" is substituted for "God/Holy Spirit" who is the true, implied agent). Finally, Paul depicts the gospel's characteristics or qualities: twice he speaks of its truthfulness (*ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου...ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*); it is also universal in nature, spreading out into all the world.

As for the rhetorical functions of this passage, it foreshadows themes which will be taken up in the *argumentatio* (the trustworthiness of the gospel, bearing fruit) and further consolidates the audience's attentiveness, receptivity, and benevolence. The Colossians are confirmed to be partakers with the author and Christians everywhere in the universally preached and accepted gospel which has been at work producing good fruit among them. Their bond with the author and with the gospel which he and Epaphras teach is thereby strengthened. They are encouraged by having their beliefs justified and their good works acknowledged. They are set firmly in the author's camp. They are on his side. The audience is unconsciously but willingly brought into alliance with the author at the outset and so will desire to maintain this unity throughout, even if later in the epistle this means that they must alter their behavior or beliefs. By speaking well of his audience (their acceptance of the truth and good works) Paul again fortifies their good-will, while

by mentioning subjects which concern them he secures their attentiveness and receptivity.

Paul's *encomium* for Epaphras is brief and direct (1:7-8). As to be expected in epideictic, he concentrates his praise upon his deeds, his motivations and the character of his soul, and his relationships and alliances. Unexpectedly he does not use comparison to accomplish his end, but rather *narratio* of his deeds and amplification by accumulation of epithets. His good deeds include teaching the Colossians the true gospel, faithfully serving Christ, working with Paul and bringing him a positive report about the Colossians. Praise of Epaphras is further amplified by mention of his associations: Paul tells of his deep emotional and professional bond with Epaphras by calling him "our beloved fellow slave" (it is implied that Paul accepts him as an equal partner on his missionary team: *συνδούλος*), and speaks of his obedient and worshipful relationship with Christ in the phrase *διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*; finally, his relationship to the audience is mentioned as positive and beneficial. In praising Epaphras's soul Paul lists his attributes as worthy of love, faithful, generous, humbly obedient, and concerned for others, particularly the audience. He is one who sacrifices of himself to serve God and others, bringing the powerful message of hope and grace to those living in darkness. Paul's description of Epaphras is wholeheartedly positive.

As for the rhetorical function of this *encomium*, most obviously it recommends the person of Epaphras. Within the entire context of the *prooimium* and

the epistle as a whole it would seem that this serves two purposes. First, it confirms the Colossians in the correctness of their beliefs and conduct and second, it continues to strengthen the audience's good-will, attentiveness, and receptiveness by indirectly praising them, speaking of divine matters which concern them, and further tying together the interests and relationship of the Colossians with those of the author. Finally, this *encomium* acts narratively to reconstruct the historical situation preceding the writing of the letter: the Colossians learned the gospel under Epaphras who has given a faithful report of their coming to Christ and good works in the faith to Paul and his associates.

In examining the rhetorical figures employed by the author in these *encomia* one discovers that only Melanchthon, among the rhetorical commentators, makes mention of any rhetorical device. He identifies a case of *distributio* or *κατὰ μερισμόν* in 1:4f (ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν...τὴν ἀγάπην...διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα), but fails to describe its function:

...Paul uses *distributio*. He could have said, 'I hear tell of your piety'. But instead the broad meaning of the noun is broken up *kata merismon* [by distribution]: 'I hear tell of your faith and hope and love'.⁷⁹

In 1:4-5 Paul makes it clear that faithfulness (or faith) and love are responses worthy of thanksgiving. They are praised as a desired reaction. They are a fruit (1:6), a consequence (1:5) of other factors. These are definitely "products" the Apostle wishes to see produced in the lives of his audience. This is a premonstration

⁷⁹Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 33.

of one of the main themes of the argumentation. It suggests that one of the goals of the Apostle is the production in his audience of faithfulness to Christ and love towards the saints by means of securing the source of these reactions, namely hope, which is to be found in the *εὐαγγέλιον*.

In 1:5 there occurs the figure of metonymy by substitution of the general for the specific where *τὴν ἐλπίδα* (which here does not represent the inward attitude) replaces that which is hoped for (perhaps *ὁ κλήρος τῶν ἀγίων* [1:12], or eternal life, reward, etc.).

It may be that the author is consciously substituting hope for that which is hoped for in order to complete the triad of Christian virtues: *τὴν πίστιν* (1:4), *τὴν ἀγάπην* (1:4), and here *τὴν ἐλπίδα*. Paul leaves further definition of this "hope" unspoken. This may be because it is something predominantly unrevealed and consisting of many diverse elements, a surprise of incomprehensible goodness and grandeur. It may also be that he wishes to leave ambiguous the content of what is hoped for so that he may keep his *principium* short and rapid and thereby not divert his readers' attention from the more weighty matters at hand which he will soon address in the *argumentatio*.

Throughout the epistle hope appears as a subordinate theme to love and faith; not only is it never properly defined, but also it is mentioned only twice: here in 1:5 and again in 1:23.

As one of its functions within the *encomia* of the *principium*, 1:5-8 amplifies

the topics of love and faith(fulness). The content of this passage is descriptive of faith and love which are themselves given as the reason for the action of the main verb of this long sentence (1:3-8), *εὐχαριστοῦμεν* (1:3).

The pair is amplified by identification of its motivation (hope, 1:5) and the source of that motivation (the gospel, 1:5). As we shall see in our discussion of Paul's *encomium* for the gospel, this essential source is itself further amplified by a description of its nature (true, 1:5), its power (growing/producing, 1:6), its sphere of influence (all over the world/in you, 1:6). Further, the means to this source are stated: hearing (1:6) and true understanding (1:6). The agent (Epaphras, 1:7) is next declared. He gave the Colossians access to this source by teaching them (1:7). Next, as we shall soon see, the agent himself is eulogized by means of descriptive epithets: 1) beloved, 2) fellow slave, 3) faithful minister; by a description of his *ethos* (character, motivation): 1) he is of Christ, 2) he is working "on your behalf"; and by his actions or deeds: 1) teaching, 2) reporting, 3) serving.

This segment of amplification is perfected and closed by a restatement of the words "love" and "faithful". This is another instance of *inclusio*, the mentioning of a key word or idea both at the beginning and end of a passage descriptive of the word or idea—as we saw with regard to "prayer" in 1:3 and 9a. It is like the front and back doors of a house which introduce and conclude as well as form specific borders about the interior. It is not only a visual key for the reader but, more importantly, it is an aural key for the audience. Its first mention introduces them to

the subject of discussion; its final mention reminds them with what the preceding statements dealt and grants them in this regard an insight into interpretation.

What we have here are actually elements of a *chiasmus* and/or *antimetabole* serving a second function as an *inclusio*. And just as the *chiasmus* (which, interestingly, corresponds precisely with the extent of our *prooimium*) consists of more than a single paired repetition, so it is possible to suggest a "multi-layered" *inclusio*. According to Lund,⁸⁰ who reconstructs an A-B-C-B'-A' type chiasm, A (1:3) and A' (1:9a) make reference to prayer, B (1:4f) and B' (1:7f) repeat regular triplets,⁸¹ while C (1:6) dwells upon "bearing fruit and increasing". Lund's A/A' pair, as seen, can serve as an *inclusio* (περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι/ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι). His B/B' can as well, with some modification: τὴν πίστιν...καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην (1:4)/πιστὸς...ἀγάπην (1:7f).

A further instance of *inclusio* in this passage which is not mentioned by Lund is the fourfold repetition of forms of the verb ἀκούω (the figure of *polyptoton*): ἀκούσαντες (1:4), προηκούσατε (1:5), ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε (1:6), and ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν (1:9a). This likewise occurs in a chiastic form (A-B-B'-A'): "we heard" (1:4), "you heard" (1:5), "you heard" (1:6), "we heard" (1:9a). It supports the passage's narrative function. This *inclusio*, to which the love/faith

⁸⁰Lund, *Chiasmus*, 207; cf. Dibelius, M. *Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament: An die Colosser* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1927), 3.

⁸¹Lund's "regular triplets" consist of 'faith', 'love', 'hope' in v.4f and 'beloved', 'faithful', 'love' in v.7f.

inclusio is subordinate, is itself subordinate to the main verb *εὐχαριστοῦμεν*. Thus, we give thanks for what we have heard; what we have heard of is the reception of the gospel, faithfulness and love. This verbal relationship may be visually represented as follows:

	1:3 εὐχαριστοῦμεν	main verb
	1:3 περὶ (ὕπὲρ) ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι	outer <i>inclusio</i>
	1:4 ἀκούσαντες	middle <i>inclusio</i>
<i>chiasmus</i>	1:4 πίστιν...καὶ...ἀγάπην	inner <i>inclusio</i>
<i>antimetabole</i>	1:7/8 πιστὸς...ἀγάπην	
	1:9a ἠκούσαμεν	
	1:9a ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι	

Not only is this sentence which runs from 1:3-8 set up with a single main verb in the indicative governing a triple *inclusio*, but it also contains an inverted chronicle (the device known as *hysteron proteron*): a smooth, step-by-step progression, or unfolding, of the process of the working and effects of the gospel in the lives of the saints presented in inverted form. By reversing the chronological order Paul is able, first, to place a very positive statement strategically at the inception of his *principium* which uplifts his audience on account of its honorific tones and the very pleasant representation it paints of the Colossians themselves. Second, this rhetorical device results in dramatic emphasis, creating a more interesting and unusual portrayal of the process and narrative he is describing. By

inverting the process he makes it less matter-of-fact, less common place. It concentrates the audience's attention upon the actual process since every step is examined in a new and unanticipated manner. It could be compared to stepping backwards up a staircase rather than hurrying down as one would normally. Each stair and each step must be consciously negotiated.

This inversion may be drawn as follows:

εὐχαριστοῦμεν

literary progression

ἀκούσαντες

πίστιν...καὶ...ἀγάπην

ἐλπίδα (χάριν)

chronological
progression

προηκούσατε...ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε

εὐαγγελίου

ἐμάθετε

πιστὸς

Ἐπαφρῶ

Within 1:6 there is a compressed chiastic structure which is dependent upon the understood double function of its participles and prepositional phrase (which appear in brackets below) which are not repeated (*syllipsis*) on account of the

clumsiness which would result from such redundancy and the space such a construction would occupy in an *exordium* which the author seems to be trying to make dense but brief. Thus a condensed chiasm makes for an introduction which is terse, compact, and tight, presenting much information in a form which still allows the audience rapid access to the *argumentatio*. This condensed *chiasmus* is structured as follows:

A. τοῦ παρόντος εἰς ὑμᾶς

B. [τοῦ παρόντος] ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ

B'. [ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ] ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον

A'. [ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον] ἐν ὑμῖν

The figure of *synecdoche* by substitution of the specific for the general (in the phrase, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε) and an instance of *zeugma* and *pleonasmus* also occur in 1:6. The phrase, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε, should not be taken too literally. The author has substituted the specific term "the day you heard" for a generic, undefined time in the past. This use of ἡμέρας is at once universal enough to cover all the moments of conversion of the audience and specific enough to give a personal touch to the letter. The individual hearer will be able to see himself in the message of the text. The use of the specific phrase ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσατε emphasizes the power of the gospel, which is instantaneous.

The verb ἠκούσατε is linked with the verb ἐπέγνωτε by the conjunction καὶ and so is intended to modify the same direct object (τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ) although in fact it needs its own distinct object (*zeugma*). In this case the verb

ἡκούσατε is somewhat superfluous since little meaning would be lost by omitting it and relying solely on ἐπέγνωτε. So two verbs are used where one suffices to communicate the idea (*pleonasmus*). This doubling of the verb actually inflates the *principium*, counteracting brevity, and does little for the cause of clarity. The insertion of ἡκούσατε does, however, fit with the repetition of forms of ἀκούω which here intensifies the power of the gospel, as noted elsewhere.

In 1:6 we find the rhetorical device of *metonymy* by substitution of the content for the container (ἡκούσατε...τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ).⁸² In this instance the content, χάριν, is substituted for the container, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. The Colossians did not hear (or obey) or come to know (intellectually) grace, but rather the message (1:5 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) which tells of God's grace. So grace in this instance may be considered a synonym for both ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας and τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (1:5). This device is employed to keep the *principium* and its narration brief. And brevity, it will be remembered, is one means of maintaining the attentiveness of the audience.

It is also interesting how the author once more opts for an abstract noun like χάρις as we previously noted with the employment of ἐλπίς in 1:5. This corresponds with his preference throughout the *exordium*. A brief glance through 1:4-8 turns up πίστις and ἀγάπη in 1:4, ἐλπίς and ἀληθεία in 1:5, χάρις and ἀληθεία in 1:6, ἀγαπητός and πιστός in 1:7, and in 1:8 ἀγάπη once again. This device is likewise used for brevity, since a more expansive elaboration upon these

⁸²What could also be happening in this phrase is that two verbs requiring different direct objects are sharing a single direct object (ἡκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε / τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ).

abstract terms would make the introduction excessively large and unwieldy in comparison with the balance of the letter.

Also noteworthy in the *principium* is the author's apparently permeating concern for the letter's recipients visible in his use of the second person plural pronoun especially with prepositions denoting interest. In 1:3 he tells his readers how he prays *περὶ ὑμῶν*; in 1:5 he reminds them of the hope which is stored up in heaven *ὑμῖν*; in 1:6 he recounts that the gospel has come *εἰς ὑμᾶς* and is producing fruit and growing *ἐν ὑμῖν*; and then in 1:7 he states that Epaphras is a minister of Christ *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*.⁸³ This continues into the transitional and propositional statement of 1:9 where we read that Paul and his associates have not stopped praying *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*. Such language can affect the emotions and judgement of an audience. This device is intended to secure both the good will and attentiveness of the audience since it shows honest concern for their welfare and speaks to matters of their interest. Their disposition towards the author should be enhanced when they consider his concern, the actions undertaken on their behalf, and the benefits promised to them.

In 1:6-7 we find the triple repetition of the adverb *καθὼς* (*καθὼς καὶ ἐν...καθὼς καὶ ἐν...καθὼς*). It is the figure of *anaphora* used as a device of comparison. The gospel has come to the Colossians "just as" it has come to all the world; it is bearing fruit and growing in the Colossians "just as" it is in all the

⁸³There is doubt at this point whether the text should read *ὑμῶν* or *ἡμῶν*, though if our assumption of the rhetorical function of this feature of vocabulary is correct it would support here the judgement of the editors of the third edition UBS of the reading *ὑμῶν*.

world; the Colossians heard and knew the grace of God in truth, "just as" Epaphras taught them.

ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ is an instance of *hyperbole*. Certainly the gospel had not come to all the world, nor even to every part of the Roman empire at the time of the writing of this epistle. The intended meaning is that the gospel has been preached extensively and is widely known. It bestows a sense of majesty, power, and honor upon the gospel by magnifying its effects. The statement thus qualifies as amplification (*αὔξησις*). It should fill the audience with respect and mystic awe as it is meant to demonstrate the divine power at work behind the gospel and behind its promulgator, Paul. The gospel which the Colossians heard and believed is one and the same gospel. They are not excluded. And the effect which this gospel is having among the Colossians is the same as that which it is having wherever else it has been preached. The evidence for this assertion is that it is everywhere "bearing fruit and growing". The Colossians are participating in the gospel "just as" other Christians elsewhere are, by having believed and having produced good works.

The third occurrence of *καθώς* does not consist of a comparison between the Colossians and believers elsewhere, but instead focuses on their reception of the gospel from Epaphras. The ambiguity of the text is open to several interpretations at this point. What exactly is the meaning of the adverbial phrase *ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*? Is it stressing that the Colossians did not deviate from Epaphras's message (you heard and learned exactly what he taught you)? Is it stressing that they perceived the

message to be true, which is how Epaphras taught it? Is it stressing that they really comprehended it, just as Epaphras had taught them the real message? Regardless of the exact translation, however, the rhetorical function of *καθώς* is clear: the message which the Colossians believed was the same message which Epaphras was trying to communicate to them and it was the true message of God's grace which has been accepted throughout Christendom. The Colossians accepted and understood (*ἐπέγνωτε*) what Epaphras had taught them, and what he had taught them was indeed the real gospel (*ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*). The reliability of the message, the faithfulness of the messenger, and the correctness of the audience's comprehension—the reality and validity of their spiritual experience (*ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*)—are emphasized in this passage. Their belief and behavior demonstrate the gospel's (i.e. God's) active work in their lives (*τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους*, etc.). They heard and believed the message as taught by a highly approved apostolic associate (*ἐμάθετε ἀπὸ Ἐπαφρᾶ τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ συνδούλου ἡμῶν, ὃς ἐστὶν πιστὸς ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ*).

The author's purpose may be to reassure his audience of the validity of the claims of each *καθώς* statement in the face of doubt. The situation does not appear to be one of complete doubt. The apostle's appeal must presumably hang upon certain elements which are accepted as true by both parties, otherwise there would exist no common ground upon which he could construct a credible *exordium*. It seems more likely that the audience may firmly accept the validity of certain of the

καθώς statements while expressing doubt towards the validity of others. By combining all claims together as in some way being of the same nature (καθώς), the author is more apt to lead his readers on to the conclusion that, yes, indeed, all the claims are factually connected and therefore valid.

Although grammatically 1:9ff. is distinct from 1:3-8 because it forms a new sentence, rhetorically and thematically 9a maintains a connection. As noted, 1:9a forms the end of the *inclusio* with its report of prayer (προσευχόμενοι), the beginning having been in 1:3 with the mention of the same word. This encapsulates the intervening verses, setting them apart as a distinct unit with a distinct topic. Furthermore, the repetition here of προσευχόμενοι acts as a key expression to sum up the *prooimion* and point the reader's attention to the proposition which follows. 1:9a thus fulfills a dual function. It serves as a transitional clause between the *principium* and the *propositio* with its repetition of the report of prayer tying it firmly to vs. 3-8, and it also acts clearly as a medium for the introduction of the following propositions by its nature as a new grammatical unit.

To recapitulate, technically speaking the author need not include an *exordium* in his oration since the *causa* of his case is honorable (*honestas*). But in order to prevent the flow of the speech from being too rough and to resolve partly the rhetorical problem of not personally knowing his audience who also apparently are not anticipating a letter, the author employs the direct form of *exordium*, known as the *principium*.

The *principium* itself is well defined by the device of *inclusio*. It utilizes both narrative and epideictic to accomplish its goals of dealing with the rhetorical problem and fulfilling the exordial functions of briefly introducing the main themes to be treated in the *argumentatio* and preparing the audience for the oration by rendering them well-disposed (*benivolus*), attentive (*attentus*), and receptive (*docilis*). The *principium* selectively narrates the events and motivations which preceded and precipitated the writing of the epistle. In keeping with the advice of the rhetoricians, the narrative is brief, clear, and plausible (its accuracy in several points being able to be verified by the Colossians themselves), generally following an inverted chronological reconstruction of the historical situation.

The section's three *encomia* prepare the audience for both the upcoming *propositio* and *argumentatio* by strengthening their pre-existent good will through measured praise, their attentiveness by speaking about them, and their receptivity by hinting at treating topics of concern to them. Paul has projected powerful *ethos* in the prescript by a simple statement of his apostleship and divine calling. The *prooemium* not only continues to build up the *ethos* of Paul and his co-workers, but also that of Epaphras who has ministered among them. Through praise for the audience—while avoiding direct confrontation for a later moment—they are confirmed in their faith and in their bonds and values with the author, their sympathies are gained, and their religious emotions and Christian commitment are used to further the author's purpose which he will reveal more fully in the upcoming *propositio*. To further the goodwill of his audience, Paul makes appeals throughout his *principium* to things

which the Colossians hold as valuable and honorable. He speaks of ἡ πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ (1:4), ἡ ἀγάπη εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους (1:4), τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας (1:5), ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ (1:6), and ἡ ἀγάπη ἐν πνεύματι (1:8). In 1:3 and 9 Paul's mention of prayer disarms any possible offense while promoting good will. It brings a sense of closer identity between himself and his audience. They both seek the honorable.

The concluding phrase of the *principium* not only helps close the introduction, but also acts as a smooth transition into the next rhetorical part. The rhetorical figures and tropes of the section are examined in greater detail with regard to their form and function.

Paul has set his appeal in pious, inoffensive, and eulogistic words while avoiding excessive flattery. He has attempted to win good will, and appealed to *pathos*, by a sustained and amplified praise for his audience. Paul acknowledges the audience's spiritual vigor by confirming their possession of the true gospel and by proclaiming its real and powerful effects of bearing fruit and growing in or among them. There are no harsh criticisms of their creed or conduct in this early stage of the speech. He reminds them that he and his co-workers have their best interests ever in mind. The good things Paul has said to the Colossians and about them in his introduction have charmed and encouraged them. They have in a sense been drawn into a rhetorical trap. They are well-disposed to the orator. He has spoken what is pleasant and what they believe and wish to be true. He is considered to be a trustworthy witness. To deny now the validity of the rest of his case and

argumentation would cast a shadow of doubt over the truthfulness of these good words about them or over their own ability to judge the orator's character. So if the orator does say something contrary to their liking later in the epistle, it will leave them with an unhappy choice: either they must admit that they have erred in their judgement of Paul's character and the positive things he has said, or they must continue to consider him trustworthy and correct themselves, bringing their thoughts and actions into line with those expounded by the Apostle. The result therefore should be a positive response to the case he will set forth in his *argumentatio*.

IV.B. THE ΠΡΟΘΕΣΙΣ (1:9b-1:12a)

The second major oratorical part of Colossians, the *prothesis* or *propositio*, follows the *principium* immediately at 1:9-12. As defined by Aristotle, the *prothesis* is one of the two indispensable parts, along with the proof (πίστις, *probatio*, *argumentatio*), of any oration.¹ Its basic purpose is to set forth briefly the proposition(s) which is(are) to be proved in the *argumentatio*.²

In essence, the proposition is a statement of the epistle's *stasis*. As we shall see, Colossians actually contains three separate propositional statements, or rather a primary statement and two lesser repetitions. The single multi-faceted *stasis* Paul expresses first here at 1:9b-12a, then again with slight variations at the transition into his second proof at 1:23a, and finally at the transition into his third proof at 2:2-5.

To summarize briefly, as seen previously in our outline of the epistle's rhetorical parts, 1:9-12 consists of a transitional phrase (1:9a), followed by a statement of the bipartite proposition (1:9b-10a) which is defined by four participial phrases revealing the main topics of the proof (1:10b-12a). The phrase of 9a belongs grammatically with 9b-12, while rhetorically it both closes off the *prooimium* by means of *inclusio* and introduces the *propositio* with its introduction of a report of prayer. As noted earlier, this outline differs from that of other rhetorical commentators.

¹*ArRhet* 3,13,2.

²For this reason it is sometimes referred to as the *partitio*, although more correctly speaking *partitio* is any enumeration or statement of divisions and may occur at any point of an oration (cf. Quintilian, *InstOr* 3,9,1).

For Melanchthon 1:9a-11 is still part of the *exordium*, consisting of a *locus* on prayer, while 1:12 is part of the *narratio* which runs through 2:15 (with an inserted *prosopographia* of Christ at 1:15-22). According to Melanchthon, the purpose of the *narratio* is to define the gospel as "a discourse, in which the benefits given through Christ are recited". This is accomplished by means of the rhetorical device of *congeries* in the following verses.³

According to Hatfield's rhetorical outline of Colossians,⁴ 1:9b-12a is still part of the *exordium* which runs from 1:1-14 and here consists of a prayer for the audience. As noted earlier, he follows this immediately with the *probatio* in 1:15-4:6 with no intervening *propositio*.

For Aletti 1:9b-12a is also still part of the *exordium* (running from 1:3-23). 1:9-14 he labels as the mention of intercession. Surprisingly, although Aletti clearly identifies the structure of the passage and the intent of the author expressed in the report of prayer, he fails to recognize its obvious propositional qualities:

Syntaxiquement, le passage est structuré assez simplement, grâce aux verbes: l'objet de la demande («connaissance de la volonté de Dieu») se voit justifié par sa finalité («mener une vie digne du Seigneur»), elle aussi explicitée par les quatre modalités qui la mettront en oeuvre:

...«-par toute oeuvre bonne en portant du fruit»
(v.10b)

-et en progressant dans la connaissance de Dieu
(v.10c)

³Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 21, 37ff.

⁴Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 182-183.

-en toute force étant fortifiés selon la
 vigueur... (v.11a)
 -avec joie rendant grâces au Père (v.12a)⁵

1:12b-14 Aletti describes as the basis for the Colossians' thankfulness for which Paul prays in 1:12a.

But returning now to our analysis of the text, we may observe that the use of διὰ τοῦτο combined with a report of prayer in 1:9a provides a smooth transition between the *principium* and the *prothesis*, connecting Paul's report of thanksgiving with his proposition and closing off the *inclusio* which began in 1:3.⁶ The phrase διὰ τοῦτο alerts the audience that a key statement is to follow, which in this case happens to be the setting forth of the *propositio* and a *partitio* of the topics of the *argumentatio*. Paul's thankfulness for the Colossians' experience with Christ has provided the introduction for the proclamation of his objectives. The Colossians have not only heard but more importantly comprehended in an effective manner "the grace of God in all its truth" (1:6). In other words, Paul has heard that the gospel has had a life-altering effect upon the Colossians. They have remained faithful to Christ and have demonstrated love for the brothers because their comprehension of the gospel is correct. That is the right and proper outcome of understanding the message of God's grace in truth. But Paul is not content with what they have achieved, good though it may be. He wants them to have a further, deeper

⁵Aletti, *Colossiens*, 67.

⁶This corresponds well to Quintilian's advice (*InstOr* 4,1,76ff) that there be a clear indication of transition from the *exordium*.

experience of this message. And if understanding was the basis of their previous experience, then it is only reasonable to presume that further, additional understanding will result in an even deeper experience.

Twice in chapter 1 the author uses the present participle *προσευχόμενοι* (1:3 and 9⁷) to describe the actions of himself and his co-laborers. Yet, like the *sententia* of Saint Benedict—"Ora et Labora", his action does not end with prayer. The epistle itself is set upon enacting and enabling transformed minds and lives. This ultimate purpose of the Apostle is expressed in 1:10 by the infinitive phrase "περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου..."

The medium employed to communicate his proposition is again, as in the *principium*, a report of prayer. Paul relates how he and his companions have prayed that God would grant the Colossians full knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that they might live worthy of the Lord and please him in all things, by producing good works and becoming more knowledgeable, being empowered to endure trials, and thanking God the Father: Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, οὐ πανόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι... And as in the *principium*, so here in the *propositio* the report of prayer is a form of the rhetorical figure of *optatio* which openly expresses the orator's desires for his audience with reference to the divine.

In 1:9a the rhetorical figure of *hendiadys* occurs in the two participles *προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι*, as they convey practically the same meaning. By

⁷A similar structure occurs in Phil. 1:9 and 2 Thes. 1:11.

using both synonyms together rather than merely one the author intensifies and draws attention to the action. He wishes that no doubt be left in the minds of his audience: he remembers them, he intercedes before God on their behalf, he is seeking their good (ὕπὲρ ὑμῶν). By this he displays his good intent, concern, and humility. This effect is further enforced by the use of *hyperbole* with the phrase ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἡκούσαμεν, οὐ πανόμεθα.... By invoking prayer he dissolves any possible offense which otherwise might be stirred up in his hearers by a direct pronouncement of their need for knowledge or improved conduct, while provoking attentiveness and a mood of sincerity with the mention of matters touching the divine.

In 1:9b Paul emphasizes the topic of knowledge via amplification. He combines here *hyperbole* (ἐν πάσῃ) with the use of synonymous nouns (*hendiadys*) and amplification by accumulation (*congeries*: ἐπίγνωσιν...σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει). ἐν πάσῃ in this context actually means "much" or "more" or "greater". The desire expressed is that the Colossians will have a greater or fuller knowledge than what they presently possess. The purpose of this device is to avoid offending or alienating the audience as could occur through a bald statement of their ignorance and to establish a perspective with which the audience would have difficulty disagreeing, namely, that there are still lessons to be learned and improvements in behavior to be made. The three nouns ἐπίγνωσιν, σοφίᾳ, and συνέσει stand together as synonyms⁸ (although this may be disputed as it is possible to interpret them as three

⁸Melanchthon, rightly I believe, identifies here the device of *tautologia*, "...since knowledge of God's will actually is spiritual wisdom"; Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 35.

distinct concepts). By employing three synonyms in close proximity the topic of knowing/knowledge is amplified by accumulation with the result that attention is focused upon this topic and the audience's need to learn or know more perfectly is highlighted.⁹ This device also functions to further the audience's preparedness to learn (*docilis*) which is primarily a duty of the *exordium* but ought to be maintained throughout an oration. And it provides an added sense of grandeur, complexity, or authority by repeating the same thought in different words. Furthermore, although this prepositional phrase defines "being filled with knowledge", it also acts as an amplification by repetition of idea. Here the figure is more complex since the repetition of the idea itself contains a further repetition:

I		R	
	i1	r1	
ἐπίγνωσιν	[πάσῃ σοφίᾳ (καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ)]		

Thus the idea of ἐπίγνωσιν is amplified by the repetition of that idea in the prepositional phrase ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, which in itself consists of an idea (σοφίᾳ) which is then amplified by repetition of that idea in the words συνέσει πνευματικῇ.

Ἰνᾱ introduces the first full statement of the πρόθεσις in 1:9b. This first statement is vague, unclear: "that you might be full of the knowledge of his will" (Ἰνᾱ πρηρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ). This phrase by itself is

⁹A similar emphasis upon knowledge occurs in other pauline captivity epistles: cf. Phil. 1:9; Philm. 6; Eph. 1:17.

insufficient; it expresses the Apostle's desire, but lacks the necessary information required by the audience to fulfill this desire. By itself it would leave the audience with a sense of not knowing, of wanting to know, of need to know. The audience is, as seen, eager to accept the Apostle's words. They wish to do as he asks, to make his desires their own. He has revealed to them his instruction and desire: that they be full of the knowledge of God's will; but there must be content added to this statement. "What is the will of God? How will we know it? Tell us what we are to do!" So the initial statement is then further defined by a phrase employing an infinitive of purpose in 1:10: "so that you may walk worthy of the Lord" (*περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου*). This is itself expanded upon by a series of four participial phrases in 1:10b-12a: 1) *ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες*, 2) *αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ*, 3) *ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομενῆν καὶ μακροθυμίαν [μετὰ χαρᾶς]*, and 4) *[μετὰ χαρᾶς] εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ....*

Again, as in 1:3-8, a complex system of interrelating and interacting and interdependent elements exists in 1:9-12. Unlike 1:3-8, however, this system is set forth in the anticipated natural chronological order and is founded upon the logic of cause and effect. First, Paul desires that the Colossians be filled with the knowledge of God's will through the attainment of spiritual wisdom and understanding. This the author apparently hopes to achieve by his prayers and by the instruction of his letter and that of his envoys (4:7ff). Second, once this has been accomplished this, the anticipated outcome will be the action of the audience in conforming their lives

to God's will, and thus a lifestyle which is worthy of and pleasing to God. As noted, this lifestyle consists of producing good works and growing still further in knowledge, being strengthened to endure, and joyfully giving thanks to God.

This system of cause and effect may be visually represented thus:

περιπατήσαι	amplified	ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ
ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου	by its	καρποφοροῦντες καὶ
εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν	components	αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει
		ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι
		μετὰ χαρᾶς εὐχαριστοῦντες

ἵνα πληρωθῇτε
τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν
τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ

ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ
συνέσει πνευματικῇ

So we see that Paul is interested in achieving in and through his audience several deliberative goals, certain of which are subordinate to others: knowledge, wisdom, understanding, worthy lives, bearing fruit, empowerment, endurance, thankfulness to God, joy, etc. The result is that we begin to discern the major purpose(s) of the author. The first main goal is definitely to instruct in knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. But this instruction is not an end in itself. Its purpose, the second major goal, is to effect action in the lives of his audience.

The author's amplification of the phrase ἵνα πληρωθῇτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ is worthy of note. The basic idea is that the audience might "know God's will/desire", but the writer has elaborated that thought by the use of a different verb: πληρωθῇτε (rather than as expected a γνω- stem verb). This may

be connected to the rhetorical goal of maintaining the good-will of the audience. As seen in 1:6, he has already praised them for coming to know the grace of God in truth (ἐπέγνωτε τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ). He has acknowledged that they have knowledge, so now their deficiency in knowledge may be positively presented as a need to come to *full* knowledge. This corresponds as well to the subtheme of "fullness" which permeates the epistle. Furthermore, by using the verb πληρωθῆτε, an expanded expression of the object must follow: i.e. knowledge must now become the object rather than the verb while the actual object, "his will", now defines that knowledge. Finally a prepositional phrase is added to modify the action: "in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ).

In 1:9-11 the author repeats the adjective πᾶς to stress fullness or completion. It is used hyperbolically throughout this section. This is also a gentle and inoffensive way of communicating his desire for changes within the Colossian community. The author is avoiding any direct attack against his audience, their beliefs, and behavior. To tell them openly that they are in need of wisdom, that their actions need correction, that they are in danger of falling into destructive heresies, or that they need perseverance might damage the author's attempts at maintaining the audience's goodwill and could in the worst scenario drive them towards his opponents' camp should they feel threatened or under attack. Such brashness could also weaken the author's *ethos* by making him seem harsh and uncaring. Instead Paul wisely chooses an approach which allows his audience to save face and not be overwhelmed by a listing of their inadequacies. By employing

πᾶς he begins on a positive footing: the Colossians already possess much wisdom and virtue, but the desire is that they would gain even more.

The Apostle's gentle approach is compounded by his use of a report of prayer, rather than an imperatival command, through which to make his desires for the community known. The desires or requests are also ultimately attributed to God (1:9b, τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ). As noted in comment on 1:3 in the *exordium*, the use of prayer as a means to communicate the commands or desires of the orator was well recognized by ancient rhetorical writers. The result here is that the negative or demanding nature of the Apostle's commands are cloaked by the intercessory style and extensive use of the adjective πᾶς, thereby making known the essence of his point of argumentation in a mild manner so that the goodwill and attention and receptiveness of his audience and his own *ethos* are not only maintained, but increased.

The *prothesis*, which is unclearly expressed in 9b, is expanded, amplified, and clarified by the infinitive phrase in 10a: περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν. Although this is an infinitive of purpose (know his will so that you may walk worthily), it also functions rhetorically as a restatement and expansion of the original proposition of 9b. It stands as the second step in the unravelling of that proposition which was hidden in the vague language of 9b. 1:10a reveals the purpose of being full of a knowledge of God's will: it is so that the lives and actions of the audience might be worthy of the Lord. The phrase ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου connotes the topics or principal aims of duty, honor, obligation, the right, the good,

and the just and so appeals to stock concepts of deliberative argumentation.

The elaboration of the primary proposition, the second half of the *stasis*, is defined by its two adverbial phrases: 1) ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου, and 2) εἰς πάντα ἀρεσκείαν. The verb περιπατῆσαι is common metaphorical expression for conduct, behavior, or manner of living. The Christian manner of living is to be "worthy of the Lord". As with the primary statement of the proposition in 1:9b, this phrase likewise needs to be expanded upon. On the one hand it is full of emotive, logical, and ethical power (as is talk of the knowledge of God's will in 1:9b) with its appeal to the divine, to the foundational principles of the Christian Church and Faith; on the other hand, the substantial realization of "walking worthy" is empty apart from explanation of what way of life is worthy before God.

Still, this is a progression in the revelation of the proposition: God's will involves the audience, and it involves their active participation in their lives. It involves living in a certain manner, a manner which is of a high standard, which measures up to God's standards. It is what God deserves from his church whom he has redeemed by the costly death of his son, Jesus. And it is the church's love and appreciation of God that empowers it to seek to know the Lord and to live so as to please him. "Worthy of the Lord" is immediately defined by the author: it is εἰς πάντα ἀρεσκείαν; that is, seeking to please the Lord in everything.

Thus, to summarize, the essential *propositio* unfolds as a two step process: first, coming to know what God desires, and second, living so as to fulfill his desires. This is the Apostle's wish for the church, for his audience. Finally, the

prothesis is completely revealed in 1:10b-12a as the author clearly and openly states what is pleasing to the Lord, what he desires. This consists of three elements, the first of which is compound. It also takes on the form of a *partitio*, an enumeration or listing of the topics to be treated in the proof or a setting out of the divisions of the proof.

The first of these three elements is to be found in 10b: ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες καὶ αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ. Although two ideas are expressed here, they seem to stand together as one unit, as is suggested from the use of the same pair in 1:6 and the subsequent development of both themes together in the *argumentatio*, and so will be treated as a pair. The thought of the phrase is amplified by the agricultural metaphor of bearing fruit and growing. This metaphor's visual and physical qualities make it easy to remember and easy to imagine the workings of the process it describes. The function of *παντὶ* has already been commented upon above.

It may be conjectured that Epaphras had informed Paul that the Colossian Christians were undergoing intellectual doubts. They were ignorant and uninformed of certain Christian knowledge or perhaps even lacking in conviction of the validity and efficacy of the instruction which they had received from Epaphras, as it was being challenged by certain individuals or ideas. In their uncertainty they were potentially in danger of following misguided teachings. In concentrating the audience's minds upon the need for knowledge he prepares them to receive the instruction which he sets forth in his proof and to reject the distorted knowledge that

undermines their confidence. A similar situation may be surmised with regard to their actions, with the resulting emphasis upon conduct.

A conceptual *chiasmus* (or *antimetabole*) occurs in 1:10 which consists of a prepositional phrase in the dative (ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ) modifying a present participle (καρποφοροῦντες) and a present participle (αὐξανόμενοι) modified by a dative phrase (τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ).¹⁰ It may be visually represented as follows:

A. ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ

B. καρποφοροῦντες

B'. αὐξανόμενοι

A'. τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ

Its function may be simply to provide a pleasant balance of thought and sound to the phrase although it also seems to connect the two participles together, adding weight to the argument that they should be seen as a single unit.

The second of the three elements of the *partitio* is found in 1:11: ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομενῆν καὶ μακροθυμίαν : [μετὰ χαρᾶς]. The central concept of this phrase is very obviously amplified first by the repetition of the word stem (*derivatio*, *παρηγμένον*, or *polyptoton*) in δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι; second by the repetition of the idea (*pleonasmus*) in the elaborate yet vague prepositional phrase κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς

¹⁰It is also possible to take the phrase ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ as modifying both participles with the other dative phrase τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ being taken as an instrumental dative expressing means (so Lohse, *Colossians*, 29), thus producing a meaning such as: "bearing fruit and growing in every good deed through knowing God."

δόξης αὐτοῦ (*perissologia*); and finally by the *hendiadys* formed by the synonyms in the prepositional phrase εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομενῆν καὶ μακροθυμίαν. The prepositional phrase μετὰ χαρᾶς may modify either δυναμούμενοι or εὐχαριστοῦντες, or perhaps even both, being left in an ambiguous position; though from position it probably goes with the latter.

The delightful device of *derivatio* (δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι) produces a pleasant sound through the repetition of the stem δυνάμ-, and thus draws attention to itself, focusing the listeners concentration, catching his ear by virtue of its unusualness so that he pauses momentarily to ponder over the idea. The author emphasizes the Christian's empowerment, his audience's empowerment.¹¹ Empowerment or capability can be considered under the topic of feasibility, one of the major aims (τελικὰ κεφάλαια) suggested for the focus of appeal in a deliberative discourse.¹² An audience is unlikely to undertake any advised course of action if they perceive it to be beyond their abilities. Here Paul assures them that there is power available to them so that they can succeed in patience and endurance.

Continuing his emphasis upon Christian power, the Apostle follows his use of *polyptoton* with a figure of thought of *perissologia* which employs a synonymous phrase (δυνάμει = κράτος) merely for embellishment since it adds nothing to the

¹¹P.J. Gräbe, "Δύναμις (in the Sense of Power) as a Pneumatological Concept in the Main Pauline Letters," *BZ* 36 (1992), 226-235, has claimed that when δύναμις is used to mean "power" that it is directly related or intricately tied to πνεῦμα (for example in Rom. 15:13, 19 and 1 Cor. 2:4f.).

¹²*RhetAlex* 1,1421b,20ff.

idea itself. Again this focuses his audience's attention on the concept of power/strength. First came the hyperbolic ἐν πάσῃ, then he doubled the emphasis upon δυνάμ-, and now with the use of a synonym (κράτος) he further intensifies his theme. This is a concept he wants his audience to be aware of. It is God's will (1:9b) and the author's wish that the Colossians have the necessary strength to endure patiently (1:11). It should be noted that the figure of *perissologia* is usually considered a vice of style. It is more common to the grand (*gravis*, *grandiloqua*) or Asiatic style¹³ and when taken too far can lead to verbosity and bombast.

The content of this passage may suggest that in his report to Paul, Epaphras had also indicated a weakness in the Colossians, a faltering in the face of opposition, perhaps unaware or in doubt of any strength being available to them. They were in danger of surrendering some of the Apostle's teachings for the traditions and teachings of certain other philosophers and teachers. In such trying circumstances, the mention of a source of empowerment could itself empower his readers. It could supply them with the knowledge and hope that a source of strength and empowerment does exist and the psychological strength to search for that source (and perhaps through the very act of searching for it to find it).

Also in 1:11 the rhetorical device of *antimereia* occurs in the exchange of the nominal quality of the noun δόξα for an adjectival one (thus emphasizing the adjectival quality: "the power of his glory" = "glorious power"). This should likewise be seen as a device of embellishment.

¹³*AdHer* 4,8,11.

The third of the themes of the *partitio* occurs in 1:12: [μετὰ χαρᾶς]: εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί. This is amplified first by the prescribed prepositional phrase μετὰ χαρᾶς; but secondly by the *encomium* for the Father: τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί. This is actually only the beginning of an *encomium* which will run through 1:22. Thus this phrase (1:12b) serves additionally as a transition into the πίστις.¹⁴ The remaining content of verse 12 will be dealt with in the examination of the first proof of the argumentation.

It should be noted that the three argumentational topics set out in the proposition (1:10b-12a) are dealt with by the writer in reverse order in his *probatio* resulting in a figure of thought of grand *chiasmus*:

<i>Propositio:</i>	<i>Argumentatio:</i>
1) bearing fruit/growing in knowledge (1:10b)	3) praising the Father's deeds (1:12-22) - <i>encomium</i>
2) persevering (1:11)	2) Paul an example of perseverance (1:23-2:5) - <i>exemplum</i>
3) giving thanks to the Father (1:12)	1) the old way vs. the new way (2:6-4:6) - <i>comparatio</i>

This chiastic structure allows for a smooth transition into the πίστις, as its first elaborated argument (ἐργασία) develops naturally from the third topic of the proposition. Furthermore, 1:10-13 contains a type of *anacoluthon* where a break in the sequence of thought occurs with the change from the second to the third person.

¹⁴Curiously the position of the participle εὐχαριστοῦντες at a transitional juncture mirrors that of εὐχαριστοῦμεν in 1:3 at the juncture of the prescript and *principium*. It could be argued that this defines yet another *inclusio*, perhaps enclosing a greater *narratio* (should one believe that the *narratio* really runs from 1:3-12). On the other hand, the repetition may simply act to emphasize the importance of the topic of thankfulness which is, after all, one of the main topics of the *pistis*.

The movement, however, is extremely smooth and helps in the transition from the proposition to the proof, yet it is distinct enough to signal a change.

Thus 1:12a, like 9a, fulfills a dual purpose, standing as it does at a pivot point between two rhetorical parts, sharing in the functions of both. It acts as a transitional clause linking the *propositio* with the first proof of the *argumentatio* which employs epideictic amplification of the Father with an internal chiasmic encomiastic amplification of the Son. This magnificent flourish is rooted grammatically in the sentence starting at 1:9. The first elaborated argument, or *ἐργασία*, begins actually in the *prothesis* in 11b with the final section of the *propositio*: [μετὰ χαρᾶς]: εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ. This acts not only as the final element of the *propositio*, but also forms the introduction of the proof for this topic in the argumentation. This overlap of the last element of the proposition with the first argument of the proof which it introduces creates a smooth, almost imperceptible entrance into the *πίστις*. There is no clear break between proposition and proof grammatically, nor need there be since Paul has decided to deal with his arguments in reverse order from their statement in the proposition. The determining factor for the rhetorical structure here is not grammatical division but that division of thought or content which so often pays little heed to the boundaries of phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs. The form of rhetoric used in this first *ἐργασία* is overwhelmingly epideictic: it is an *encomium* to the Father which itself contains an *encomium* to the Son.

The goal of the Apostle in this proof, as stated in the *prothesis*, is that his

audience would be filled with joy and thanksgiving to God the Father. His method for accomplishing this goal is the panegyric. By reminding the audience of the Father's great works performed on their behalf, they will be spurred on to praise, gratitude, and thankfulness—the very intent of the writer in the third element of his *partitio*. The audience are not simply told to be thankful, they are drawn by the author into a mood of thankfulness by the presentation of specific proofs. He puts their minds to thinking about the mighty works of God, of his love for them, of their debt to him, of their redemption in Christ. These proofs are intended to move the hearts of the Colossians and, we may presume, were assumed by the author to have the power to create that effect because they are in conformity with beliefs and values shared with the audience about the nature of God and his works through Jesus Christ and to the audience's personal experience of having come from paganism into faith in Christ. In addition, the first proof almost certainly is intended to fulfill another of the propositional elements, to grow in the knowledge of God, through its theological didactic content.

However, much of the theological content of the first proof probably consists of a reminder from Paul of doctrine which they have already accepted and believed, but which may be in danger of slipping away from them as they encounter difficulties, persecution, or intellectual opposition. The positive tone of the letter would suggest that Paul is more likely anticipating possible developments in the congregation, rather than counteracting current troubles.

IV.C. THE ΠΙΣΤΙΣ (1:12b-4:6)

The essential purpose of this most important part of an oration, the *argumentatio*, is, as noted, to persuade the audience of the legitimacy of the *causa* by providing reasoning in support of the *propositio*.¹ This reasoning, or argumentation, can take on several forms. It may provide positive support of the proposition (*confirmatio*) or/and the negative undermining of opposing propositions (*refutatio*). Its appeal may be intellectual and rational (*logos*), emotional (*pathos*), or moral (*ethos*). It may employ brief straightforward logical proofs (*enthymeme*, *epicheireme*) or elaborated arguments full of rhetorical figures. An author can of course combine all or any of these elements in endless variation.

From at least the time of Aristotle it was taught that in confirmation the orator can derive his proofs from two sources: external (inartificial) proofs which exist apart from rhetoric, and internal (artificial) proofs which are rhetorical constructions. Inartificial proofs consist of any which exist independently of the orator, that are not subject to oratorical invention, such as witnesses, contracts, laws, and the like.² Artificial proofs themselves may be of two types. Just as dialectic possesses two modes of logical argumentation—induction and

¹*InstOr* 4,2,79. Quintilian calls this the "verification of the facts as put forward in the statement".

²*ArRhet* 1,2,2: "As for proofs, some are inartificial, others artificial. By the former I understand all those which have not been furnished by ourselves but were already in existence, such as witnesses, tortures, contracts, and the like; by the latter, all that can be constructed by system and by our own efforts. Thus we have only to make use of the former, whereas we must invent the latter" (Τῶν δὲ πίστεων αἱ μὲν ἄτεχνοί εἰσιν αἱ δ' ἐντεχνοί. ἄτεχνα δὲ λέγω ὅσα μὴ δι' ἡμῶν πεπóρισται ἀλλὰ προϋπῆρχεν, οἷον μάρτυρες βάσανοι συγγραφαὶ καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, ἐντεχνα δὲ ὅσα διὰ τῆς μεθόδου καὶ δι' ἡμῶν κατασκευασθῆναι δυνατόν. ὥστε δεῖ τούτων τοῖς μὲν χρῆσασθαι τὰ δὲ εὐρεῖν). Cf. *ArRhet* 1,15.

sylllogism—so also does rhetoric. Rhetorical induction is known as example (παράδειγμα, *exemplum*) and rhetorical syllogism is known as *enthymeme* (ἐνθύμημα, *enthymema*).³ An example is the adducing of some past happening or supposed happening, adapted to persuade the hearer.⁴ Examples move from particular to particular within the same class or order and can be of two types: those derived from actual historical events,⁵ and those invented by the orator or someone else (such as a fable, parable, or analogy).⁶ An *enthymeme* is a syllogism which for ease and simplicity has been abbreviated. An *enthymeme* may omit either the major or minor premise of an actual syllogism, or it may differ from a syllogism by drawing its conclusion not from a universally applicable premise, but from one based on general opinion, tradition, probability, or prejudice.⁷ The *epicheireme* (ἐπιχείρημα, *epichirema*) is a form of *enthymeme*, being a full syllogism employed

³*ArRhet* 1,2,8: "Now all orators produce belief by employing as proofs either examples or enthymemes and nothing else..." (πάντες δὲ τὰς πίστεις ποιοῦνται διὰ τοῦ δεικνύναι ἢ παραδείγματα λέγοντες ἢ ἐνθυμήματα, καὶ παρὰ ταῦτα οὐδέν πῶς).

⁴*InstOr* 5,11,6. Foster ("Development of Stasis", 22) suggests that in a deliberative discourse the orator should make use primarily of examples and attempt to refute his opponent's strong arguments before setting out his own proofs.

⁵According to Aristotle, the main point of reference in time of epideictic is the present because it is the existing condition of something which is considered for praise or blame (*ArRhet* 1,3,4; cf. *PartOr* 3,10; 20,69), but this seems an almost forced attribution perhaps added merely because of the past and future time references of the judicial and deliberative genres respectively. Epideictic itself often recalls the past and anticipates the future (see *ArRhet* 1,3,4; *InstOr* 3,4,7; cf. *PartOr* 21,71.) Epideictic's concern for an audience's future behavior can be noted in such speeches as Isocrates' *Panegyricus*, *To Demonicus*, and in his address *To Philip*.

⁶*ArRhet* 1,2; 2,20; *PartOr* 11,40; *DeInv* 1,30,49; *AdHer* 4,69,62; *InstOr* 5,11,6.

⁷N.B. Quintilian's example (*InstOr* 5,9,12—drawn from Hermagoras): "Atalanta cannot be a virgin, as she has been roaming the woods in the company of young men" (...non esse virginem Atalantam, quia cum iuvenibus per silvas vagetur).

in rhetoric, and is thus rare.⁸ Maxims and proverbs consist solely of the premises or conclusions of *enthymemes* and are therefore also types of *enthymemes*.⁹ In the proof of Colossians all three Aristotelian types of proof are employed: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Both inductive (example) and deductive (argument) means of proof are used. Throughout, many of the proofs used are artificial. There is almost no reference to witnesses: there is no quotation from Scripture, no saying of Jesus appealed to. The only inartificial proof (though it is often appealed to) is the gospel tradition received by the audience from Epaphras and held in common with the author and his companions.¹⁰ That is not to say that there is complete agreement with regard to the tradition. It is very possible that the letter contains elements of the tradition which are new to the audience, since one of the stated desires of the author is that his audience grow in knowledge. To a small degree there may have been differences in the tradition or the understanding of the tradition between author and audience which the author is seeking to set straight.

It was also common in ancient rhetoric to fortify arguments by accumulating and elaborating them.¹¹ According to the *Ad Herennium*, there exists a "most

⁸*InstOr* 5,14,14. In later rhetoricians the term *epicheireme* was occasionally synonymous with the *enthymeme*; see Caplan's note on pp. 106-107 of his translation of *AdHer*.

⁹*ArRhet* 2,21,2. Although Aristotle also includes these as a type of witness and so as inartificial proofs in *ArRhet* 1,15.

¹⁰In *InstOr* 5,11,42-44 Quintilian suggests that both tradition and supernatural authority should probably be classified as artificial proofs since they require interpretation from the orator in order to be formed into arguments. But this seems unreasonable, since by this logic all inartificial forms of proof could be reclassified as artificial (e.g. the interpretation of a contract, the intent of a witness); cf. *PartOr* 2,6.

¹¹See *AdHer* 2,18,28ff; 4,43,56ff; Mack, B.L. and Robbins, V.K. *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1989).

complete and perfect argument" which, like an entire oration, possesses its own *dispositio* which runs as follows: *propositio* (proposition), *ratio* (reason), *confirmatio rationis* (proof of the reason), *exornatio* (embellishment), *complexio* (summary).¹² This is certainly a description of an elaborated argument (ἐργασία).¹³ Other rhetoricians taught the construction of elaborated arguments based upon other rhetorical devices, such as the *chreia*, the proverb, or the *encomium*.¹⁴

Refutation is accomplished either by employing counter examples or counter *enthymemes* (which may draw opposite conclusions from the same premises used by one's adversary in his *confirmatio*) or by offering inartificial counter evidence or by raising objections (that is, adducing exceptions to the adversary's premises). The orator should seek to show his opponent's conclusions to be unnecessary or improbable, remembering that all arguments (even demonstrations) can be refuted.¹⁵

For the author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* anticipation is very important both in counteracting any prejudices which an audience might hold or develop in the course of an oration and in weakening or destroying any objections which might

¹²*AdHer* 2,18,28. Cf. *DeInv* 1,37,67 and Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 217, who replaces the *propositio* with an *expositio*.

¹³Although Caplan calls it an *epicheireme*; see his note on pp. 106-107 of his translation of *AdHer*. But that the author of *Ad Herennium* is describing something more than a simple *epicheireme* is clear from the inclusion of embellishment.

¹⁴Consider, for example, the *progymnasmata* of Hermogenes, in Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric*, 23-38. Cf. Hock, R.F. and O'Neill, E.N. *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: Vol. 1. The Progymnasmata* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

¹⁵*ArRhet* 2,25; *InstOr* 2,4,18; *DeInv* 1,42-78. Aristotle discusses fallacies most fully in his *Prior Analytics* (2,26-27) and *Sophistical Refutations*.

arise from one's argumentation. So it is a device which can be used not only to dissipate ill-will but also to weaken an opponent's charges by casting doubt upon them in advance.

Anticipation is the method by which you anticipate the objections that can be advanced against your arguments and sweep them aside. You must minimize the other party's arguments and amplify your own... [by means of] amplifications. You must set one argument against one other when yours is the stronger, and several against several, and one against many, and many against one, contrasting them in all possible ways, amplifying your own and making those of your opponents weak and trifling. This is the way in which we shall employ anticipations.¹⁶

In Colossians the propositions to be proved have been set out before the proof in a *partitio*.¹⁷ The deliberative objective of Colossians, as stated, is to enlighten the Colossians (and Christians in general?) about the will of God so that they might live in a way pleasing to God and avoid the opposite course. In particular we identified three goals which the Apostle was seeking to persuade and encourage the Colossians to strive for in order to please God: 1) to bear fruit in every good deed and increase in the knowledge of God, 2) to be strengthened to persevere in the faith in order to attain maturity in Christ, and 3) to give thanks to the Father for the redemption he has accomplished for them through Christ. Each

¹⁶*RhetAlex* 33,1439b,3-12: Αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ δι' ἧς τὰς ἐνδεχομένας ἀντιλογίας ῥηθῆναι τοῖς ὑπὸ σοῦ εἰρημένοις προκαταλαμβάνων διασύρεις. δεῖ δὲ τὰ μὲν ἐκείνων μικρὰ ποιεῖν, τὰ δὲ σαυτοῦ αὐξεῖν, ... ἐν ταῖς αὐξήσεσι... χρὴ δὲ παραιθέσθαι καὶ ἐν πρὸς ἕν, ὅταν τὸ σὸν μείζον ᾖ, καὶ πρὸς πλείω πλείω, καὶ ἐν πρὸς πολλά, καὶ πολλὰ πρὸς ἕν, διαλλάττοντα κατὰ πάντας τοὺς τρόπους, τὰ μὲν σαυτοῦ αὐξοντα, τὰ δὲ τῶν ἐναντίων ἀσθενῆ καὶ μικρὰ ποιῶντα. καὶ τοῦτον μὲν τὸν τρόπον ταῖς προκαταλήψεσι χρησόμεθα.; cf. 18,1432b,11ff.

¹⁷*InstOr* 4,5,1ff; though it is also possible to place each proposition before its proof (*InstOr* 4,4,1) or to set forth the propositions either implicitly or explicitly within the *narratio* (*InstOr* 3,9,7; 4,2,54 and 79 and 86).

of these three topics is developed using different rhetorical techniques. The first relies on the epideictic genre and consists of an *encomium* to the Father. It employs the usual epideictic means of persuasion: amplification. The second topic relies upon the deliberative genre to accomplish its ends. The chief means of proof for deliberative is here employed: the example. The Apostle presents himself as the example of perseverance to be imitated. The third and final topic again relies upon epideictic rhetoric and comparison as a means of proof, as the Apostle compares the way of the world with the way of those who are alive in Christ. In this proof alone is "negative" material introduced: an ἀνασκευή or refutation of opposing arguments. This is counterbalanced by a κατασκευή or confirmation of the orator's arguments.

IV.C.1. First Elaborated Argument (1:12b-22)

In 1:12 the author moves almost unnoticed from his proposition to his *argumentatio* which runs from 1:12b through 4:6. The transition is so smooth because it takes place within a single continuous sentence as the Apostle moves from an enunciation of his purpose into an exaltation of the Father. As Paul lists the final element of his *propositio* he makes it the first element of his *argumentatio*, revealing a chiasmic development in the proof of the themes set forth in the proposition. This first argument, which contains the so-called "Christ Hymn", expresses through extended amplification the Apostle's proposition that the Father is worthy of thanks. It consists of artificial, deductive proofs constructed into a eulogy. Immediately, however, he transforms his eulogy to the Father into an *encomium* to the Son in

1:14-19—an *encomium* within an *encomium*. That this section is primarily concerned with producing thankfulness to the Father rather than to Christ is seen not only in that this fulfills one of the stated purposes of the proposition, but also in that the "Christ Hymn" is contained within the boundaries of an *inclusio*. Paul first expounds upon the redemption which has come to the Colossians from the Father (1:12-14), then he turns to the work of the Father in the Son (1:14-20), and finally he returns to the topic of their salvation given by the Father (1:20-23). This type of enclosure formula is common in Colossians (as seen already, for example, in the *inclusio* of 1:3-9) and seems to be a favorite method of construction for the author (particularly in epideictic sections). It serves as a mark for the introduction and conclusion of a theme and reminds the audience of key points through its repetition of themes or ideas. The theme is the Father's great act of grace which he has powerfully accomplished on behalf of all Christians (the theme being personalized to the author and his readers and emphasized by the use of first and second person plural pronouns), as is seen first in 1:12b ("he has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints") and is repeated again in 1:20-22 where the Father again becomes the subject of the main verbs ("he has reconciled you who were enemies, to present you holy..."). The force of the argument derives from the mighty deeds of the Father and the benefits which have accrued to the Colossians as the result of those deeds. The secondary purpose of this section, of the eulogy for Christ in particular, is in fulfilling the propositional element of making known the will of God (1:9) and the knowledge of God (1:10). The information set out in this passage, whether new to

the audience or a confirmation of what they had already been taught, also plays a part in the unfolding argumentation of the entire *pistis*, since the subsequent proofs build on top of it. The tradition and divine authority of the gospel message (part of which at least the audience have already received from Epaphras [1:5,7] and have come to believe) provide the unspecified source of authority for the formulation of the argument.¹⁸

This entire section is beyond doubt epideictic. It is full of amplification and comparison, the two essential means of praise and blame. As such it employs *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* to accomplish its ends. The ethical appeal derives from the very character of a loving and powerful God acting on behalf of his people. The logical appeal is expressed in a recounting of the acts which the Father has accomplished in Christ. And the pathetic appeal issues from the emotive language and amplification of these divine acts. The writer apparently understood that the emotive response which he sought in his audience (thankfulness to God) could not merely be commanded. Instead he first attempts to create a mood or situation which is conducive to the desired emotional response, which in turn will produce thanksgiving. The main type of proof employed is logical: he relates an elaborated argument consisting of several reasons why the Colossians should be thankful to God. Each of these reasons is essentially the same—that God the Father has provided redemption through his Son—though the vocabulary and metaphors shift to emphasize different aspects of this redemptive activity.

¹⁸See *InstOr* 5,11,43-44.

The rhetorical commentators have really said rather little about the rhetoric of this section of Colossians. For Melanchthon, 1:12-2:15 represents a *narratio* the purpose of which is to define the gospel. Within this he finds inserted in 1:15-22 a *prosopographia*, "a delineation, of the person of Christ, which teaches that Christ is God and man truly and in nature."¹⁹ Melanchthon further indicates the existence of a *locus* on the Son as Creator within this section.

As noted, Hatfield believes that 1:12-14 is still part of the *exordium*. The *probatio* starts then immediately at 1:15 (with no *propositio* expressed) and runs through 4:6. It consists of a section of theological instruction in 1:15-2:23 followed by a section of exhortation (which Hatfield labels as a *partitio*) in 3:1-4:6. According to Hatfield, the section of theological instruction is taken up with discussion of the problem of the Colossian heresy. First he instructs his audience concerning the pre-eminence of Christ in 1:15-23, and then he speaks about his own ministry in 1:24-2:7 before alerting his hearers to the dangers of the heresy in 2:8-23.²⁰

In Aletti's outline, 1:12-22 is still part of the *exordium* which runs from 1:3-23. 1:9-14 he describes as the 'mention of intercession', while 1:15-20 is called a 'hymnic expansion'. He concludes his *exordium* with a *partitio* in 1:21-23 which he sees as setting forth the major themes of the *probatio*. According to Aletti, the function of the *exordium* of Colossians is to reveal the situation (presumably in 1:3-

¹⁹Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 38.

²⁰Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 183ff.

8), obtain the good-will of the audience (presumably in 1:9-14), and develop a christology (presumably in 1:15-20) which reappears throughout the epistle.²¹

Considering the form of his *exordium*, it is difficult to understand why Aletti does not identify 1:13-22 as a digression if he does not include it in the proof, both since it is preceded by a clear statement of purpose in 1:9-12 and since it stands out as a rather large and clear section in such a brief discourse. It is certainly theoretically possible to consider this passage as a digression.²² The letter could then be divided into a brief introduction and narration of circumstances with appropriate proposition followed directly by an eloquent digression about Christ and the Father, known in more recent times as the "Christ Hymn". Similarly, 1:13-22 could even be classified as a *narratio*.²³

²¹Aletti, *Colossiens*, 52.

²²The essence and function of the digression were disputed matters amongst ancient theoreticians. Some considered the digression an independent speech part as essential and fixed in its place as the *exordium* or proof. Others taught that it was a specific type of *narratio*, while still others saw it as any portion of the speech which treated matters not directly pertinent to the issue at hand. Corax, the first writer of a rhetorical *art*, named the *παρέκβασις* as the fourth part of a speech (Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 89). Hermagoras placed it as a part between the proof and peroration (*DeInv* 1,51,97). In his early work Cicero did not think it should be considered as its own speech part but did classify the digression as one of three types of narration (*DeInv* 1,19,27; cf. *AdHer* 1,8,12-13 and *DeInv* 1,51,97). Other rhetoricians taught that the *narratio* should end with a partition (*προκατασκευή*—a combination of the *προέκθεσις* and the *μερισμός*—*partitio*, *divisio*) followed by a digression (*digressio*). Quintilian on the other hand did not believe that the digression either deserved its own place as a speech part or that it should be considered as a type of narration. Rather he defined it as the treating of some theme which although having some bearing upon the issue was not directly in keeping with the logical order of the speech (*InstOr* 4,3,14); it could appear at any point in an oration and acts only as a support or ornament to the part in which it occurs (*InstOr* 3,9,1ff). Although earlier rhetoricians like Corax and Hermagoras seem in general to have placed the digression just before the peroration as a support for the argumentation, it appears that by the late first century A.D. most rhetors were declaring it an indispensable part to be included between the narration and argument (See *InstOr* 4,3,1).

²³In *DeInv* 1,19,27 and its parallel, *AdHer* 1,8,12-13, three types of narrations are listed. The first variety briefly relates the facts of the case at issue. Its purpose is to turn the details of the case to the advantage of one's party with the goal of achieving victory. The second type of narration,

Earlier, in our discussion of the epideictic elements of the *prooemium*, we noted some of the general characteristics of the demonstrative genre. Now, since we have claimed that the entire first argument of the *probatio* consists of epideictic, it seems useful to introduce here more detailed information about that *genus* and in particular concerning the form of the *encomium*.

The *encomium* is perhaps the most common form of epideictic (in fact it is so common that the term ἐγκωμιστικόν is synonymous with ἐπιδεικτικόν among some rhetoricians).²⁴ And although judicial rhetoric was the most widely described, numerous rhetoricians also wrote on epideictic and *encomia*. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* offers a rather standard method for creating an *encomium* in honor of an individual.²⁵ Such *encomia* draw their material from three basic sources: the external circumstances (*res externae*/τὰ ἐκτὸς ἀγαθὰ, τὰ ἐπίκτητα), physical attributes (*res corporis*/σῶμα), and qualities of character (*res animi*/ἀρεταὶ ψυχῆς) of the subject of our praise.

The external circumstances of our subject include such chance influences as descent (*genus*/ἐγγένεια), education (*educatio*/παιδεία), wealth (*divitiae*/πλοῦτος,

styled the *digressio* by Cicero but unnamed in *AdHer*, is described as going beyond the strict limits of the case. The reasons for choosing this type of narration include 1) to attack someone (*criminationis*), 2) to draw a comparison (*similitudinis*), 3) to entertain the audience (*delectationis*), 4) to amplify a topic (*amplificationis*), 5) to win audience belief (*fidei*), 6) to effect a transition (*transitionis*), or 7) to prepare the stage for something else (*alicuius apparationis*). The third variety of narration appears to have been intended only for the practice narrations of the *progymnasmata* as a means of improving proficiency in the two previous types, although it could be used in literature. There were two sub-types of this genre, one dealing with the facts of the case, the other with the persons involved.

²⁴See Burgess, *Epideictic*, 113-131.

²⁵*AdHer* 3,6,10-11.

χρήματα, κτήματα), powers (*potestates*/δυνάμεις, δυναστεία), titles to fame (*gloriae*/εὐδοξία, τιμή), citizenship (*civitas*/πατρίς, πόλις, ἔθνος, πολιτεία), friendships (*amicitiae*/φίλοι), and the like.

Physical attributes include such natural bodily qualities as agility (*velocitas*/ποδώκεια), strength (*vires*/ισχύς, ῥώμη), beauty (*dignitas*/κάλλος), health (*valetudo*/ὑγίεια, εὐεξία), and the like.

Qualities of character are those features of the inner man which revolve around soundness of judgement and thought. They include considerations of wisdom (*prudentia*), justice (*iustitia*), courage (*fortitudo*), self-control (*modestia*), and the like.

Throughout the oration the orator should keep in mind that what pleases an audience most are rare or unique deeds, or those which surpass hope or expectation, noting particularly what was done for others and not selfishly.²⁶

The orator may use any number of approaches in setting out those elements of the subject which are to be praised, but perhaps the easiest methods are the chronological and the topical.²⁷ The chronological approach can begin by recounting circumstances preceding or attending birth, move through childhood and adolescence, describe the accomplishments of adulthood, and even the effects of the subject's life and works since his death. The topical approach seizes upon certain

²⁶*InstOr* 3,7,16.

²⁷*AdHer* 3,7,13-14. This is echoed in *InstOr* 3,7,10ff.

of the most outstanding of the subject's deeds or virtues and proceeds to praise or blame by means of their amplification.

The ancient handbooks on elementary rhetorical exercises (*προγυμνάσματα*) taught what almost amounted to a standardized outline for an *encomium* of a person:²⁸

- 1) prologue (*προοίμιον*)
- 2) race/origins (*γένος/γένεσις*)
- 3) education (*ἀναστροφή*)
- 4) achievements (*πράξεις*)
- 5) comparison (*σύγκρισις*)
- 6) epilogue (*ἐπίλογος*)

Πράξεις was considered the chief topic of the *encomium*, while *σύγκρισις* was regarded as the most important division.²⁹

According to the *Progymnasmata* of Hermogenes (17,20-22) *encomia* for gods are to be formed on the same principles as those for human beings, although they are called by the name "hymns". Menander the Rhetor in his treatise on epideictic deals with hymns to gods first among some 23 types of *encomia*. He considers there to be eight types of hymns: cletic (*κλητικοί*), apopemptic (*ἀποπεμπτικοί*), scientific (*φυσικοί*), mythical (*μυθικοί*), genealogical (*γενεαλογικοί*), fictitious (*πεπλασμένοι*), precatory (*εὐκτικοί*), and deprecatory (*ἀπευκτικοί*).³⁰ He claims that "no hymns to the gods can be composed outside

²⁸See Nadeau, "Progymnasmata of Aphthonius", 265-285; cf. *Menander Rhetor*, eds. D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), xxv-xxviii; and Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata* in Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric*, 23-38.

²⁹Burgess, *Epideictic*, 123 and 125. Comparison was sometimes set along side amplification as the means of epideictic. It is at least a form of amplification. Cf. Forbes, "Comparison", 1-30.

³⁰*MenRhet* 333,8-25.

these patterns",³¹ although it is common for orators to mix elements of two or more types of hymn together. Unfortunately, none of these types comes anywhere close either to what we have in Colossians or to the descriptions of *encomia* for gods found in the earlier rhetorical handbooks or *progymnasmata* and therefore are of little use for the current study.

Quintilian also gives a brief summary of how a god may be praised:

In praising the gods our first step will be to express our veneration of the majesty of their nature in general terms, next we shall proceed to praise the special power of the individual god and the discoveries whereby he has benefitted the human race....Next we must record their exploits as handed down from antiquity. Even gods may derive honor from their descent...or from their antiquity...or from their offspring....Some again may be praised because they were born immortal, others because they won immortality by their valor, a theme which the piety of our sovereign has made the glory even of these present times.³²

The *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* deals with epideictic under the headings of eulogistic (ἐγκωμιαστικόν) and vituperative (ψεκτικόν) speeches. According to that work, eulogy consists of, first, the amplification of creditable purposes, actions, and words, and, second, the attribution of qualities which do not exist.³³ Vituperation

³¹*MenRhet* 333,26-27: καὶ παρὰ τούτους τοὺς τρόπους οὐκ ἂν ὕμνοι γίγνιντο εἰς θεούς.

³²*Verum in deis generaliter primum maiestatem ipsius eorum naturae venerabimur, deinde proprie vim cuiusque et inventa, quae utile aliquid hominibus attulerint....Tum si qua ab iis acta vetustas tradidit, commemoranda. Addunt etiam dis honorem parentes...addit antiquitas...progenies quoque....Laudandum in quibusdam quod geniti immortales, quibusdam quod immortalitatem virtute sint consecuti; quod pietas principis nostri praesentium quoque temporum decus fecit. InstOr* 3,7,7-9. For further epideictic schemata see Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 132-135.

³³This differs slightly from Quintilian who taught that the proper function of epideictic is "to amplify and embellish", that is to say, to magnify real deeds, qualities and circumstances and to make the presentation pleasing to the audience: *Sed proprium laudis est res amplificare et ornare. InstOr* 3,7,6.

is the opposite: minimalization of creditable qualities and amplification and creation of discreditable ones.³⁴ The author goes on to list what qualities are worthy of praise (the opposite of which are worthy of blame). These are 1) the just (τὰ δίκαια/*iusta*), the unwritten customs of the greater part of humanity, the so-called universal goods such as honoring parents and doing good to friends; 2) the lawful (τὰ νόμιμα/*legitima*), the written agreements governing human behavior; 3) the expedient/useful (τὰ συμφέροντα, χρήσιμα/*utilia*), which consists in the preservation or acquisition of some good or the rejection or avoidance of some harm or evil; 4) the honorable or noble (τὰ καλὰ, ἔνδοξα/*honesta*), those things from which honor or distinction may be gained; 5) the pleasant (τὰ ἡδέα/*iucunda*), anything which causes delight; 6) the easy (τὰ ῥάδια/*facilia*), anything which may be accomplished with little time or labor or at little expense; 7) the practicable/possible (τὰ δυνατά/*possibilia*), anything which can be accomplished; and 8) the necessary (τὰ ἀναγκαῖα/*necessaria*), anything which can be perceived of as compulsory because of circumstances.³⁵ These are also sometimes referred to as the major aims (*capitula finalia*/τελικὰ κεφάλαια) or stock issues of deliberative rhetoric, to which are sometimes added the safe (τὰ ἀκίνδυνα/*tuta*) and anticipated effect (τὸ ἐκβησόμενον/*eventus*).³⁶

³⁴*RhetAlex* 3,1425b,35.

³⁵*RhetAlex* 3,1421b,35ff and 3,1425b,35ff.

³⁶See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 204; Foster, "Development of Stasis", 76; cf. Nadeau, R.E. "Hermogenes on 'Stock Issues' in Deliberative Speaking," *SpMono* 25 (1958), 59-66.

When we turn to an examination of the *encomia* of this passage it becomes clear that none of the theoretical rhetorical models has been followed exactly. Instead there is a mixture of elements from various models and a unique form to each *encomion*. The eulogy to the Father follows a topical arrangement. Its emphasis is primarily upon the Father's achievements (πρᾶξις) and secondarily upon his qualities of character (ἀρεταὶ ψυχῆς) as reflected by his deeds. If the topics of deliberative may be mentioned in discussion of epideictic, then the *encomium* appeals to the honorable (the character of the Father's actions), the useful, the pleasant, the easy, the necessary, and the safe (as to what God's deeds have accomplished from the viewpoint of the audience), and anticipated effect (the future benefits promised to the audience). Not only does the *encomium* seek to accomplish the third objective of the *partitio* by recounting evidence with emotive potential in order to promote thankfulness to God, but it also helps fulfill the more general objective of the *propositio* of making known the will of God through its recapitulation of divine action in history.

The *encomium* for the Father divides into three sections. The first section runs from 1:12-14. At that point emphasis shifts to the Son in 1:15-18, but returns again to the Father in 1:19-22. The two *encomia* do overlap at the edges so that 1:14 and 19, for example, include material that can also be included in the eulogy for Christ. The first and last section of the *encomium* for the Father (1:12-14, 20-22) concentrate upon the action of the Father in reconciliation, while in the *encomion*

for Christ, the Father receives glory from his "offspring", his "image" and "firstborn".

The deeds for which the Father is praised are on the whole past accomplished actions, though a continuing present and future aspect is visible at times.

I. The Father's Deeds (παράξιος):

A. Section One (1:12-14)

1. He has pronounced the Colossians qualified (= justified?) (1:12)
2. He has established an inheritance for the saints (1:12)
3. He has rescued Paul and his audience from evil powers (1:13)
4. He has transferred them into his Son's kingdom (1:13)
5. He has accomplished redemption/forgiveness of sins through Christ (1:14)

B. Section Two (1:15-18)

The Father receives glory indirectly from the character, authority, and great deeds of his Son:

1. He is the image of the Father (1:15)
2. He is lord over creation (1:15)
3. He has created everything (1:16)
4. Everything was created for him (1:16)
5. He has primacy over all things (1:17,18)
6. He holds all things together (1:17)
7. He is the head of the church (1:18)
8. The church consists in him (1:18)
9. He is the beginning (1:18)
10. He is the firstborn of the dead (1:18)

C. Section Three (1:19-22)

6. He has come to dwell in his fullness in Christ (1:19)
7. He has reconciled everything to himself through Christ (1:20)
8. He has made peace through Christ's death (1:20)
9. He has reconciled the Colossians, his enemies, through Christ (1:21-22)
10. He will present them holy before himself (1:22)

II. The Father's Qualities of Character (ἀρεταὶ ψυχῆς) are only indirectly visible in the eulogy. His deeds (as well as certain descriptive phrases) portray him as holy ("in the light", 1:12; will present you holy", 1:22), generous ("inheritance", 1:12) heroic ("rescued", 1:13), powerful ("rescued from the power of darkness" and

"kingdom of his Son", 1:13), loving ("Son of his love", 1:13; "he was pleased", 1:19), and magnanimous ("you who were enemies he has reconciled", 1:21-22).

The *encomium* for Christ follows mainly a topical arrangement, though it is also semi-chronological. It focuses upon Christ's attendant circumstances (τύχη), achievements (πρᾶξις), and powers (ἐξουσίαι). Appeal is made mostly to the honorable. Like the eulogy for the Father, a secondary but important function of the *encomium* is to make known the will of God through his unfolding work in history.

I. Attendant Circumstances (τύχη):

- A. He is the image of the invisible God (1:15)
- B. All the fullness dwells in him (1:19)

II. Achievements (πρᾶξις):

- A. He was instrumental in achieving redemption (1:14)
- B. He created all things for himself (1:16)
- C. He holds all things together (1:17)
- D. He was instrumental in achieving universal reconciliation (1:20)
- E. His death was instrumental in bringing universal peace (1:20)
- F. His death was instrumental in reconciling enemies (1:21-22)
- G. He is instrumental in the future presentation of the saints as holy before God (1:22)

III. Powers (ἐξουσίαι):

- A. He is a king (1:13)
- B. He is the firstborn of creation (1:15)
- C. He is before all things (1:17)
- D. He is the head of the church (1:18)
- E. He is the beginning (1:18)
- F. He is the firstborn of the dead (1:18)
- G. He has primacy in everything (1:18)

It may be noted that the Apostle uses refining (*expolitio*) in order to embellish the topics of both of his *encomia*. *Expolitio* is a figure of thought which "consists in dwelling on the same topic and yet seeming to say something ever new".³⁷ It is accomplished by repeating the same idea in a different form or by

³⁷*AdHer* 4,42,54.

altering the idea itself.³⁸ This is evident both in the multiple metaphors he uses to describe the Colossians' salvation (sharing in an inheritance, being transferred from the authority of one kingdom to another, being forgiven of sins, etc.) as well as in his portrayal of Christ (he is before all things, is the beginning, has primacy in everything, etc.). In this way the author dwells upon his subject, magnifies it, and progressively reveals more about it. This is a form of amplification by augmentation.³⁹

The *encomia* strengthen intellectual conviction (*logos*) through reliance upon the facts of the Father's beneficial accomplishments for the audience's salvation and of the Son's position of authority in the cosmos and instrumental participation in the Father's grand design in history. This is most of all an argument based on logical facts. Barely a single aspect of the Christian's salvation is left unmentioned in the *encomion* to the Father: redemption, adoption, justification, sanctification, reconciliation, etc. Ethical proof (*ethos*) is derived from the character of the Father who is presented as full of love and good intent through his deeds which are portrayed in heroic terms and which are all directed toward the benefit of the person of the audience. It is also derived from the person of the Son who is portrayed as active and authoritative. Pathetic proof (*pathos*) is closely tied to both the logical and the ethical: the stirring self-sacrifice of Christ to secure their salvation, the

³⁸See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 413-419. Kennedy (*NT Interpretation*, 15) comments that Christian rhetoric usually selects a few proofs and stresses their absolute validity; cf. Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 162f.

³⁹*InstOr* 8,4,3-9.

painful remembrance of their own former lives as God's hardened enemies, the awe inspiring power and authority of Christ.

The use of several parallel metaphors, antithetical images, and devices of embellishment in these verses contributes much to their argumentative power. Metaphors, as long as they are "fresh", are potent channels of intellectual (*logos*) and emotional (*pathos*) proof because of their very physical, visible nature. They awaken images from the storehouse of personal experience before the eyes of the mind, while the vividness or remembrance of the images draws up emotions from the heart. In other words, metaphorical language has a special power to prove and to move through its ability to transport the hearer into another world, the world of the imagery of the metaphor, and there participate in the event of the metaphor as though it were present and actual. In this way the intellect is persuaded by its "first-hand view" of the truth present in the metaphorical world, while the events of that world touch the emotions.

1:12-14, through its figures of embellishment but especially through its antithetical imagery, performs comparison (*σύγκρισις/comparatio*) which is so important as a form of proof in epideictic. The proof of the passage primarily rests, however, upon evidence in the form of examples (*παράδειγμα/exemplum*): the numerous examples of the Father's deeds of power, love, generosity, etc. which should provide a firm foundation for establishing his worthiness to receive praise and thanks.

In addition to the main purpose of promoting thanksgiving to God the Father,

other secondary objectives can possibly be inferred from these verses. The repetition of shared beliefs and values (which apparently these are) may also be intended to strengthen the audience's adherence to those values and beliefs. In this way it encourages continuing conformity with tradition and makes it more difficult for the audience to reject any of the epistle's teachings. To maintain the prevailing harmony they will be careful to bring themselves into complete conformity with the light. The doctrinal content of this section implies responsibilities which will only be clearly expressed later in the letter (there are certain expectations upon those who are members of Christ's kingdom). These verses also, from a different perspective, continue the positive appraisal of the audience seen in the *principium* (redeemed, in the light, on God's side), thus furthering the good-will of the audience. Moreover, to oppose the message implies being faced with the accusation of turning to the authority of darkness. It also suggests that those espousing contrary concepts (philosophy) are in unholy allegiance with such dark powers and must be resisted.

As noted above in our discussion of the *prothesis*, 1:12a has a transitional function linking the *propositio* with the first proof of the *argumentatio* which as epideictic rhetoric uses amplification to praise God the Father and Jesus Christ. The proof begins within the sentence which starts at 1:9 although the proof itself could not be said to start before 1:11b where the final element of the *propositio* begins ([μετὰ χαρᾶς]: εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ). The chiasmic structure of the *propositio* and *argumentatio* means that this final element of the *propositio* also forms the

introduction to the first proof. This makes the transition into the *pistis* hardly perceptible. The proof seeks to instill joyful thanksgiving and the knowledge of God and his will in the audience by relating the mighty deeds of the Lord on their behalf and the authority and nature of Christ. It may also serve to strengthen the audience's cohesion to shared values.

Considering the semi-poetical style of this section of Colossians it is not surprising that it is packed with rhetorical figures and tropes. In 1:12 we find the rhetorical figure of *aetiologia* (also called *causae commemoratio*) in the phrase εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς. This is a device of argumentation which functions like an *enthymeme* by providing a reason or justification for a statement: "give thanks to the Father *because* he has qualified you [us]". The transition from proposition to proof is immediate. In the space of a brief clause the author sets out his final proposition and presents a proof to substantiate it.

The great deeds of the Father are, in 1:12, densely intertwined in a couple of metaphors, the first being τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς. As with the description of all spiritual matters, it is difficult to speak of salvation in any other way than the metaphorical, as it is a non-physical and in many regards not yet experienced experience for which exact terminology is lacking. For this reason it is difficult to determine to what degree the author purposely chose his metaphorical language and to what degree it was forced upon him by the lack of non-metaphorical terms. Certainly we can say that his accumulation of metaphors and other rhetorical devices throughout this passage indicates that he was purposely amplifying and embellishing

his topic. In the present case *τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς* stresses both the mercy, love, and generosity of the Father and the complete dependency and indebtedness of the audience. This therefore is an intellectual proof (*logos*) with emotive power (*pathos*).

The first metaphor of 1:12 is connected directly to the second: *εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων*. Here Paul uses a metaphor from the realm of human customs of inheritance to communicate that which Christians will receive from God at the time of their eschatological salvation. It probably can be equated with *τὴν ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀποκειμένην ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* (1:5). In neither instance is the content of this hope/inheritance elaborated upon. These ideas are left ambiguous. Rhetorically, however, such ambiguity can have a more powerful effect than that which is clearly described. It leaves definition of the concepts to the speculations and imaginations of the individual hearer, which can be more personal and powerful. Also by leaving these ideas undefined, the author keeps his discourse brief and refrains from diverting his audience onto another subject secondary to his main aim. The Christian's heavenly inheritance could, however, have formed the subject of an interesting digression, but our author seems to have considered that unnecessary to his purpose.

The highly elaborated phrase *εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί* borders on the vice of *perissologia* since it multiplies words unnecessary to the communication of its idea. This again displays the author's tendency towards the

grand style. As long as it does not overstep the boundaries of *proprietas* such embellishment can produce a sense of sublime majesty, nobility, and importance.

The verse ends with a metonymy drawn from nature, ἐν τῷ φωτί, where the object intended has been replaced by a metaphorical characteristic. This metonym is connected with another in 1:13, τοῦ σκότους, by the device of *antithesis*. The metaphorical use of light and darkness is ancient and ubiquitous. It is the dualistic metaphor of moral judgement drawn from visible, naturally occurring contrasts. It can be an effective way of presenting a simplified version of a more complex situation by transforming ambiguous matters into clear "black and white" issues. Its purpose in such situations is to establish or intensify the polarization of ideas or of the audience, thereby drawing them to or confirming them in a certain belief or course of action. Thus it can amplify the moral force of an idea, confirm the audience in a shared belief, or compel them to take sides, depending upon the intent of the author.

In 1:12 several theological concepts underlie its terse metaphorical language. The punctiliar, almost legal nature of τῷ ικανώσαντι ὑμᾶς brings to mind justification while τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου certainly refers to the theological concept of adoption. The phrase ἐν τῷ φωτί introduces the topic of the Kingdom of God (although here it would seem to equal more precisely "the kingdom of his beloved Son" when considering the antithetical chain of ἐν τῷ φωτί...τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους...τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ).

1:13 continues with more of the same. As in 1:12, several different

metaphors are strung together in rapid succession. There is the metaphorical imagery of heroic deliverance, ὅς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς, which is here combined with a doubled political metaphor: ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκοτους...εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ. The political metaphor itself produces another figure of *antithesis*. The words and images used contribute to a heightened valuation of the Father's actions and the audience's situation. They were trapped, enslaved, powerless. God rescued them. They were under the dominion of ultimate evil. They are now in the realm of love. The Colossians have been taken out from under one authority and placed under another. The moral *antitheses* of light versus darkness and of the good kingdom versus the evil power clearly contrast the former state of the audience against their present state in Christ. Considering the chain of *antitheses* in these verses (light—darkness/power of darkness—kingdom of the Son) it is possible to imply the synonymity of "the light" in 1:12 with "the kingdom of the Son" in 1:13. These *antitheses* create and enforce the belief that all is positive and good on the side of the Father (light, liberation, inheritance, holiness), while on the other side all is darkness, bondage, wickedness, and oppression. *Antithesis* is an extreme form of comparison, a key component of proof in epideictic. It enhances the virtues of the subject by presenting the failures, ugliness, or vices of its opposite. The descriptions τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκοτους and τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ are examples of the device of *periphrasis* (*circumlocutio*) which substitutes many words for a single word or name. It is a figure of amplification used to avoid sounding ordinary. It is useful in adding drama and dignity to an idea, though if it

transgresses *proprietas* it can lead to bombastic inflation. The verse finishes with another device of amplification, *antimereia* (or *anthimeria*). This involves the exchange of one part of speech for another, in this case a noun for an adjective, thus emphasizing the adjectival quality: τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ "of the son of his love" = "beloved son". Here it seems to be used to further a sense of majesty and sublimity as well as to emphasize the positive characteristic, love.

In 1:13 we also have the first brief elements of certain figures of repetition which only really begin in 1:15 with the *encomium* for Christ. There are two occurrences of the device of *hypozeuxis*—one involving the relative pronoun ὃς and the other the personal pronoun αὐτός—and one of *anaphora*, also involving ὃς. *Hypozeuxis* is the repetition of a key word throughout a passage for the sake of emphasis or melody. *Anaphora* is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or units. It too is a device of emphasis, but also of textual cohesion and organization. Although the *hypozeuxis* of αὐτός and the *anaphora* of ὃς only technically start at 1:15 because of the change of subject from the Father to Christ and the expansion of the *anaphora* to ὃς ἐστιν, their foreshadowing here in 1:13 and the *hypozeuxis* of ὃς are important since they give a physical connection and smoother transition between the *encomium* for the Father and that of the Son. This fact suggests either that the author did not incorporate pre-existent material beginning at 1:15, or that he has so well worked his lead-up to the material that the transition into it is smooth and sequential and practically identical to the transitions we have noted up to this point.

The second of the four relative pronouns introduces the transformation from the theme of the mighty acts of divine redemption of the Father (1:12,13) to the *encomium* in praise of the person and work of Christ.

The brief transitional clause of 1:14 contains little rhetorical embellishment in comparison with the rest of the first proof. There is a *metaphora* with the word ἀπολύτρωσιν taken from the realm of slavery. It acts to define more precisely the idea of transference in the previous verse and to embellish and amplify the general concept of the salvation brought by the Father—an idea repeated and refined throughout this *encomium*. There is also the device of *epergesis* in the equation of τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν with τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.⁴⁰ This figure employs an added grammatical construction which qualifies or explains its referent. It is a figure of definition which clarifies an idea or gives it an interpretive twist. Here its main function seems to be in clarifying the meaning of the metaphor "redemption".

As we move into the *encomion* for Christ in 1:15 we encounter the beginnings of a device which is at work throughout the Christ hymn. This is the device of elegant variation which consists in the description of a previously mentioned person (or place or thing) often by means of epithets while avoiding the repetition of his or her name. The rhetorical figure of definition of *peristasis* also occurs in 1:15-18. Having similarities to elegant variation, it defines a person or thing through circumstances.

The *encomion* for Christ starts immediately in 1:15 with the figure of

⁴⁰Although Bauer (*Rhetoricae Paullinae*, vol.2, 596) sees this as a case of *asyndeton* and so interprets "redemption" and the "forgiveness of sins" as two distinct objects.

paradoxon in the phrase *εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου*. An apparent contradiction is established by the counterposing of the visible "image" with the "invisible". This device is common in poetry and is used here for balance, compression, and a sense of the sublime. The figure of *asyndeton* also occurs in this verse between *ἀοράτου* and *πρωτότοκος* with the omission of a connecting *καί*.⁴¹ It keeps the eulogy brief and focused.

The word *πρωτότοκος* functions both as a figure of *metaphora* and of *anthropopatheia*. As a metaphor drawn from family relationships it carries the meaning of priority or even sovereignty. As an *anthropopatheia* it ascribes the human attribute of temporality to the divine. The metaphor helps maintain brevity while adding to the decorative and poetical style of the passage. It also allows the author to introduce the theme of Christ's primacy which is repeated using *expolitio* throughout the eulogy. *Πρωτότοκος* is repeated later in 1:18 also at the beginning of a colon, thus resulting in the figure of *anaphora*. The repetition of *πρωτότοκος* in 1:18 also involves the figure of *antanaclasis* or *diacope* since the meaning of the word in each verse differs. In 1:15 it signifies being first in order of rank but in 1:18 it signifies being first in chronological order.

There are a number of rhetorical devices which begin in 1:15 but extend to other verses of the Christ hymn. The phrase *ὃς ἐστίν* is repeated in 1:18 creating

⁴¹Botha, J. "A Stylistic Analysis of the Christ Hymn (Colossians 1:15-20)," in *A South African Perspective on the New Testament*, eds. J.H. Petzer and P.J. Hartin (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 241 (subsequently Botha, "Stylistic Analysis"), however, considers this a case of *ellipsis* with the omission of *ἐστίν* leaving the linguistical context ambiguous, though it is probably more reasonable to consider the single use of *ἐστίν* as an instance of *syllipsis* (the grammatical device in which one word in a sentence loosely refers to two or more words in that sentence).

a figure of *anaphora*. We also find beginning in 1:15 an occurrence of *hypozeuxis*, consisting of the multiple repetition $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma\ldots\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ldots\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ldots\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu\ldots\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ldots\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota\nu\ldots\pi\hat{\alpha}\nu\ldots\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$. By repeating a key word throughout a series of clauses, this device creates emphasis and melody. The repetition of $\delta\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ combines with the twelvefold repetition of the personal pronoun $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ in 1:16-20 (another occurrence of *hypozeuxis*) to intensify emphasis upon Christ. The use of the relative pronouns in 1:15 and 18 and of the personal pronoun $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ throughout serves two purposes, first, by sheer number, they keep the reader's attention on Christ, and second, they divide this *encomium* into numerous, short, concise statements of praise for Christ. This gives the *encomium* a quick pace with a rapid onslaught of proofs. The reader is hit by one praiseworthy quality or deed of Christ after another. The speed, quantity, and weight of these proofs should overwhelm the reader, compelling his spirit ($\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$) towards new or renewed praise and appreciation for Christ.

The eulogy is further embellished by two instances of *polyptoton* in 1:15-16 and one of *chiasmus* in 1:15-17, these figures adding balance and concentration on themes. The first *polyptoton* consists of the repetition $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\omicron\rho\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\nu\ldots\delta\rho\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\ldots\acute{\alpha}\delta\omicron\rho\alpha\tau\alpha$, the second of $\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ldots\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta\ldots\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$. The *chiasmus* may be outlined as follows:

- (A) $\pi\rho\omega\tau\acute{o}\tau\omicron\kappa\omicron\varsigma\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma\ \kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$
- (B) $\delta\tau\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$
- (B') $\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ \delta\iota'\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$
- (A') $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \pi\rho\delta\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$

Within the bounds of 1:16 is a figure of *antimetabole*, a sort of mini-*chiasmus*: A. $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta$, B. $\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$; B'. $\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$, A'. $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$. This device

creates balance and enhances ornamentation while increasing emphasis upon the words it repeats. In addition, this verse contains a semantic *chiasmus* which may be outlined as follows:⁴²

- (A) ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
- (B) καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
- (B') τὰ ὄρατὰ
- (A') καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα

It also contains a double figure of *antithesis* with the oppositions of οὐρανοῖς—γῆς and τὰ ὄρατὰ—τὰ ἀόρατα. The device is used here to stress completeness, universality. There are three more minor chiasms (*antimetabole*) which have their first half in 1:16 and their conclusion later in the eulogy, as shown:

In 1:16-17:

- A. ἐν αὐτῷ
- B. τὰ πάντα
- A'. τὰ πάντα
- B'. ἐν αὐτῷ

In 1:16,20:

- A. τὰ πάντα
- B. δι' αὐτοῦ
- B'. δι' αὐτοῦ
- A'. τὰ πάντα

and

- A. ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
- B. ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
- B'. ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
- A'. ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

⁴²Botha ("Stylistic Analysis", 243) proposes the existence of another semantic *chiasmus* within the verse. He bases this upon the assumption that *θρόνοι* and *ἐξουσίαι* = earthly powers, and that *κυριότητες* and *ἀρχαὶ* = spiritual powers, an assumption based upon the work of Bammel (1961; 90-92). The chiasm would be structured as follows:

- (A) εἴτε θρόνοι
- (B) εἴτε κυριότητες
- (B') εἴτε ἀρχαὶ
- (A') εἴτε ἐξουσίαι

All of these chiasms promote emphasis and embellishment.

Botha ("A Stylistic Analysis", 242) claims that an *ellipsis* occurs in 1:16 and that the word ἐκτίσθη should be supplied to the phrase τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα. There is an *ellipsis* in 1:16 with the double omission of the definite article in the phrase τὰ πάντα [τά] ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ [τὰ] ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, although it is included in some manuscripts (cf. the similar phrase in 1:20). The device promotes brevity.

In another example of *expolitio*, the author amplifies his topic through the use of four synonyms (*synonymia* or *hendiadys*) in 1:16: θρόνοι...κυριότητες...ἀρχαὶ...ἐξουσίαι. Here we also find a fourfold figure of *metonymy* in which subjects such as "rulers" and "lords" are replaced by elements associated with their power: "thrones", "dominions", "principalities", "powers". These figures are accompanied by the device of *polysyndeton* in the fourfold repetition of εἴτε. This "excessive" use of synonyms and conjunctions slows down the speed of the discourse, allowing the mind of the listener to concentrate upon the topic of the four synonyms, effecting measured thought and solemnity. It further strengthens the rhythm and balance of the *encomium*. The plentiful use of the conjunction καὶ not only in this verse but also in verses 17 and 18 represents further incidences of the figure of *polysyndeton*. In each instance its purpose is identical to the *polysyndeton* of εἴτε.

In 1:16 we find as well instances of *homoeoteleuton* in the word pairs πάντα/ἀόρατα and γῆς/κυριότητες. This device, which is characterized by similar

sounding suffixes at the ends of clauses, is a precursor of rhyme and adds yet more ornamentation to the discourse.

In the refining of ideas in 1:16 and its following verse the author has used the figure of *incrementum* as a device to avoid the fault of *pleonasmus*, though to some degree the results are a mild *tautologia*. For example, verse 16's "all things were created by him" is expanded upon by the thought of verse 17: "all things are held together by him". Likewise, verse 17's "he is before all things" is expanded by verse 18's "he is the head of the church". This device avoids *tedium* and introduces new information about old ideas.

The phrase ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ is repeated in 1:19 forming a figure of *anaphora*. The purpose is to intensify emphasis upon Christ. Another curious repetition is that of the sequence of prepositions in 1:16 and again in 1:19-20 ἐν αὐτῷ...δι' αὐτοῦ...εἰς αὐτὸν—ἐν αὐτῷ...δι' αὐτοῦ...εἰς αὐτὸν.

The structure of 1:17 forms the device of *antimetabole*: A. καὶ αὐτός, B. πρὸ πάντων, B'. καὶ τὰ πάντα, A'. ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν. As in the previous instances of this figure it provides balance, rhythm, decoration, and emphasizes the repeated words or ideas.

In 1:17 and 18 there occurs the figure of *anaphora* in accordance with the strictest interpretation of that device with the repetition of the exact phrase in sequential *cola*: καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν...καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν. Its purpose is to give force and emphasis to the content of the repetition. It is also decorative. In connection with this *anaphora* and with the *hypozeuxis* of αὐτός noted for 1:16-20 is the

threefold repetition in 1:17-18 of the emphatic form of the pronoun αὐτός. It is yet another device of emphasis and embellishment. These pronouns are not necessary for the conveyance of their particular ideas. They focus attention upon Christ and his position to put to rest any thoughts of others holding his place or possessing his attributes.

1:18 commences with a double anatomical metaphor. In the first *metaphora* Christ is called the "head" (κεφαλή) with the understood meaning of "ruler" or "governor". In the second *metaphora* the church is described as the "body" (τοῦ σώματος), indicating the group of those over whom Christ governs. In order to clarify the second of these metaphors the author attaches a modifying phrase, τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Botha⁴³ believes that what is represented here is a figure of metonymy with τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας = congregation. But this would explain only the term "body" and so seems unlikely. It is probably better to see here instead an instance of *antiptosis* or *anthimeria* with the genitive phrase "of the church" possessing an adjectival meaning, "the ecclesiastical body" (i.e. "head of the body which is the church"). I would suggest that these devices have been selected by the author mainly to continue adding variety to his ever repeated theme of Christ's primacy.

Moving ahead in 1:18 we find another group of two metaphors. In the first Christ is referred to as the "beginning" (ἀρχή) and in the second as the "firstborn" (πρωτότοκος, which as the repetition of a single key word from 1:15 also involves

⁴³Botha, "Stylistic Analysis", 243.

a figure of *iteratio*). Again Christ's primacy is stressed in new variations. The term "firstborn", as noted above, is also an *anthropopatheia* by ascribing to God the human attribute of temporality.

The open end of the phrase ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή creates a figure of *syllipsis*. Words important for the referential context have been omitted: Of what is Christ the beginning? The result is that the listener must fill in the omission. The main point is that the author wishes to stress the universality of Christ's sovereign primacy. The omission also helps to keep the *encomium* focused and brief. Brevity and emphasis are also achieved by the figure of *asyndeton* in 1:18 with the omission of the conjunction καί between ἀρχή and πρωτότοκος.⁴⁴

The words πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν can be seen as relying upon a figure of metonymy to communicate their idea. In this case the inhabitants of a region, so to speak, are substituted for the region itself. Christ was not the "firstborn out of the dead" but the "firstborn out of death". It is possible that the figure is accidental as it seems to add little advantage apart perhaps from stylistic variety.⁴⁵

The rhyme-like figure of *homoeoteleuton* occurs at the end of the last two clauses of 1:18 (τῶν νεκρῶν...πρωτεύων). It is ornamental if it is not simply accidental.

For such a short verse, 1:19 is rich in rhetorical figures. It is here that the transition is made between the *encomium* for the Son and the last portion of the

⁴⁴Though Botha ("Stylistic Analysis", 243) considers it another case of *syllipsis*.

⁴⁵The difficulties here are reflected in the manuscript tradition. The actual meaning changes little whether or not ἐκ is omitted.

encomium for the Father. The two mix together in this verse. Paul changes his subject but without sufficient signalling. The result is a figure of *anacoluthon*; the thought is left incomplete causing confusion. Is the subject of εὐδόκησεν the Father? Christ? or "All the fullness"? It is most likely that this is a case of the pious reluctance to name God.⁴⁶ The figure of *anacoluthon* is common in spoken language when a speaker alters the intent or structure in mid-sentence, although here it seems intentional in order to avoid naming God and to emphasize again the thematic words "all" and "fullness". Τὸ πλήρωμα, therefore, functions as a figure of metonymy since it is the substitution of the subject by one of its characteristics. The infinitive κατοικῆσαι adds metaphorical flavor and visual tangibility to the thought of the sentence.

A figure of *polyptoton* begins in this verse and is fulfilled in 1:22 by the repetition ἀποκαταλλάξαι...ἀποκατήλλαξεν. It connects the general, universal statement of the Father's act of reconciliation with the specific, personal application of that reconciliation to the audience. Bauer considers εἰρηνοποιήσας to be a *metaphora*.⁴⁷ It brings vividness to the act of reconciliation.

1:20 also contains the rather interesting combination of two figures of *metonymia* (or possibly *metalepsis*). The first metonym replaces the concept of "sacrifice" with its related element "blood". The second metonymy substitutes the

⁴⁶Botha, "Stylistic Analysis", 242, calls this a "deep structure" omission of a "taboo form" (ὁ θεός) and further identifies this as a case of *ellipsis*. O'Brien, *Colossians*, 51, suggests that the subject of the verb should be "all the fullness" understood as meaning "God in all his fullness". Cf. Col. 2:9.

⁴⁷Bauer, *Rhetoricae Paullinae*, vol.1, 181.

means "cross" for its result "death". The final result is the meaning "through/by his sacrificial death". These figures heighten dramatic effect and intensify emphasis upon the concepts of death and sacrifice.

The repetition within 1:20 of δι' αὐτοῦ represents the figure of *iteratio* or *conduplicatio*, a reduplication accomplishing emphatic emphasis. The unusual positioning of δι' αὐτοῦ in its second instance in 1:20 creates a figure of *hyperbaton*, the abnormality of which is attested by the textual tradition. This figure also is emphatic. The same *antithesis* is repeated in 1:20 as was found in 1:16, only in inverted order (γῆς—οὐρανοῖς), and with the same effects of stressing universality and providing rhythm and balance. The repetition here of this full group of words represents a figure of *epanalepsis* (*repetitio*).⁴⁸ The effect is again emphasis upon universality.

In 1:21 the author changes from speaking in sweeping universal terms about the divine work in history and in what almost seems to be a return to the *narratio*-like style of the *principium* introduces the audience (v.20 τὰ πάντα...ὑμᾶς v.21), thereby personalizing the account. This move from the general to the specific and personal is a useful device in regaining or maintaining the attentiveness of the audience, which the author may have thought was necessary following such a theoretical and semi-poetical passage. The role of the audience in the author's portrayal of the grand scheme of history is set out in 1:21-22 using the figure of *antithesis* with the temporal adverbs ποτε...νυνὶ δὲ contrasting their pre-Christian

⁴⁸See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 312.

state with that in Christ. The phrase ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς employs *incrementum* in its use of synonymical terminology, with the first description, "being alienated", confirmed and reinforced by the second, "enemies". This device is used to heighten intensity and can give dramatic impact. The device of *paradoxon* is used in describing the cause of their former enmity with God: τῇ διανοίᾳ - ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς. Here the intangible realm of the mind is set immediately beside and connected to the very physical, concrete world of deeds.

In 1:22 we find an instance of *antiptosis*, the exchange of cases. Here a noun in the genitive case has been substituted for an adjective: ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ "the body of his flesh" = his physical body. This device emphasizes the quality of the exchanged word, so that here "fleshly" or "physical" is stressed. The complete phrase also contains a figure of *anthimeria* or the substitution of one part of speech for another. In this case there has been the substitution of a prepositional phrase for a genitive one, with the new prepositional phrase requiring the repositioning of the appropriate prepositional phrase which is nevertheless retained to maintain the intended idea. "By his physical body through death" (ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου) = through/by the death of his physical body. Here the two devices emphasize "death" and "physical".

The next clause of 1:22 (παραστῆσαι ὑμᾶς...κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ) is somewhat metaphorical with its image of the presentation of subjects before a king. The reference of κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ is ambiguous (before the Father? or the Son?) resulting in the figure of *amphibologia*. This may be to avoid naming God or, more

likely, to intensify the close identification between Christ and the Father. A number of other devices are also used. There is the repetition of synonyms (*synonymia* or *hendiadys*) which are roughly alliterative: ἁγίους...ἁμώμους... ἀνεγκλήτους. The doubled use of conjunctions here points to the figure of *polysyndeton* (καὶ...καὶ). These figure help to give more majesty and weight to the topic they embellish.

1:23 acts as a transitional phrase between the first and second arguments of the proof with its grammatical connection to the first and its thematical connected to the second. It will be dealt with fully under the second elaborated argument.

In conclusion then, as will have been noted from the close examination of the argumentative and figurative devices of this elaborated argument, certain themes and objectives recur continually throughout. The amplification of both *encomia* depends heavily upon *expolitio*. In the eulogy for the Father the theme of his achieving universal redemption is recounted in several variations. In the *encomion* for the Son, his authority and primacy are endlessly reinforced. The author's tactic is always in danger of straying across the boundary of *proprietas* and into the vice of *pleonasmus*. However, in this first proof the author has for the most part avoided this danger by the numerous devices and breadth of variety displayed. The writer displays skill in amplifying what really amounts to only two themes (redemption and primacy) into a coherent, varied string of proofs which nevertheless remain dense and brief. The expansion achieved through amplification should accomplish in the audience the dual goal of creating a foundation for and atmosphere of thanksgiving

and of providing instruction in the will of God by observing how he has worked in history through Christ from the creation of the cosmos to his sacrificial redemptive death and resurrection to life and power.

As the passage running roughly from 1:12-23 has been the most thoroughly examined and debated section of the epistle, it seems only right to discuss briefly some of the theories about the text and their relationship to a rhetorical analysis.

A wide spectrum of modern New Testament scholarship has come to consider 1:15-20 (or thereabouts) to be a pre-Pauline 'hymn' inserted by the author into the letter's flow of thought.⁴⁹ Numerous attempts have been made to reconstruct this hymn with no conclusive result. Additionally, several attempts have even been made to discover the original hymn's purpose. An exact reconstruction of this presumed hymn, however, has eluded scholars' best efforts. There is much disagreement over the original background of the hymn, over what versification of lines should be followed in any reconstruction, and to what degree the author relied upon and reworked an external source.

⁴⁹J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Tradition and Redaction in Colossians 1:15-20," *RevB* 102 (1995), 231-241, for example, assumes that the Colossian Christ Hymn was taken over by Paul from a pre-existent source and retouched for his own purposes. He further contends that in the case of the Colossian hymn Paul has more thoroughly altered the original than in the case of the Philippian hymn (Phil. 2:6-11). This, he suggests, means that the original behind the Colossian hymn was more distant from Paul's theology than the Philippian original. In fact, he claims, it was an example of "beguiling, persuasive speech" (Col. 2:4) which Paul therefore reworked against its original intent.

Helyer, L.R. "Recent Research on Colossians 1:15-20 (1980-1990)," *GTJ* 12 (1991), 51-67, claims that the scholarly consensus of the 1960's and 70's that 1:15-20 was a pre-existent hymn is collapsing. Rather, the text is a "poem" composed by the author reflecting his cosmic Christology rooted in the OT teaching of the creator-redeemer God and Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Rhetorical criticism cannot give definitive answers to most of these critical questions, but in some cases it can point in a definite direction. Clearly we are dealing here with a 'hymn', but it is not certain what type of hymn. Clearly we are dealing here with a hymn as understood rhetorically—a eulogy for a divinity—but it is not necessary that such a hymn reflect the stringent stylistic structures most form critics have sought for our passage. Although it is impossible and imprudent to state categorically that the author did not make use of a pre-existent piece of poetry, it is also unnecessary, rhetorically, to presume that he needed one. The author throughout the letter shows himself capable of (even with a tendency towards) a highly figurative, grandiloquent style of epideictic characterized by complex chiasms, accumulations of synonyms and metaphors, pleonastic flourishes, and *expolitio*. The passage also fits well with the argumentative structure of the epistle, fulfilling as it does one of the expectations of the *propositio*. It is true that the passage stands out as a distinct unit and that 1:15-18 could be removed without too much disruption to the flow of the passage, but that can be as easily attributed to its content and amplificatory purpose as to a hypothetical pre-existent form. That is not to say that the author could not have been relying upon some sort of pre-existent or traditional material, though there is no need rhetorically to posit reliance upon any source more physical than the traditions, phrases, rhythms, and

imagination of the author's conscious mind or the impenetrable swirl at the seat of creation in his subconscious mind.⁵⁰

From a rhetorical critical perspective these dilemmas of other critical methods are somewhat irrelevant since, in the case of Colossians, they do not arise from the rhetorical analysis but derive solely from the form of analysis involved. However, as stated, this does not preclude the author's use of pre-existing traditional material or a full-blown poem, but it does suggest that if he did he has worked it rather well into the structure and argumentative flow of the document.

⁵⁰A similar conclusion is reached by J. Behr, "Colossians 1:13-20: A Chiastic Reading," *StVladTQ* 40 (1996), 247-264, who finds no evidence that the hymn was authored by anyone other than the writer of the epistle himself. G.D. Fee, "Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?" *BulBR* 2 (1992), 29-46, likewise argues for the Philippians' hymn that there is no ground for considering it as a pre-existent hymn, but that it should rather be seen as Pauline prose. Although exalted in style it is constructed like prose, is Pauline in content, and fits perfectly with the flow and themes of the letter.

IV.C.2. Second Elaborated Argument (1:23-2:5)

The proof of the second proposition of the *partitio* ("being strengthened with all strength according to the power of his glory for all patience and endurance [with joy]", 1:11) is introduced at 1:23 with a warning that the audience must remain faithful to the gospel which was preached to them, if they wish to obtain its benefits. This proof relies heavily upon the example of the Apostle's life and emphasis on the unique and glorious nature of the gospel. The warning in 1:23 implies that the Colossians are not yet perfect, or complete. They have need to come to perfection in Christ and it is for this reason that the Apostle writes, revealing here again briefly the essence of his *stasis*. The autobiographical sketch of the Apostle is positive and relies extensively upon *ethos* as a source of proof while simultaneously building up further Apostolic *ethos*. The stress laid upon his suffering and service on behalf of the audience and others like them serves to fortify audience goodwill towards Paul.

The intent of the propositional statement in 1:11 is to encourage the Colossians to endure suffering joyfully. In the second proof Paul tells his audience of what a noble nature suffering can be, of its purpose in God's plan of loving grace, and of his own faithfulness to his calling in spite of hardships which is implied as an example (*exemplum*). In 1:24 he states, "I rejoice in my suffering". He is not here attempting to encourage some deviant enjoyment of pain; the suffering which he describes is portrayed as both a privilege and an honor which

produces positive results. It is a privilege and honor because it "fills up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ"; that is, the Apostle (and by implication the audience) is thereby allowed to participate in the continuing work and role of Christ. That this suffering produces positive results is seen in the phrase, "for the sake of his body which is the church", and later in 2:2, "that their hearts might be encouraged..." The ultimate ministry which Paul's sufferings are working to accomplish in the church is "to present everyone perfect in Christ", and this is the same ministry in which the Colossians may participate by likewise suffering.

1:23 follows on with a "second *propositio*" from the "second *narratio*" of 1:21-22. Like the narrative quality of the *principium*, 1:21-22 recounts the historical situation of the audience that precedes the writing of the epistle. Like the *principium* these verses are followed by a propositional section (1:23a) which touches upon their future fate (a clear indication of the epistle's deliberative *causa*). Closer examination also shows that 1:23b reiterates several themes of the *principium* in 1:5-6. Both passages mention the hope of the gospel which the audience has heard and which has come to everyone. This repetition shows how the Apostle introduced already in the introduction major topics which were to be dealt with later in the proof.

As briefly noted earlier, there is not only an abbreviated re-statement of the *propositio* in 1:23a, but also again at 2:6. These are actually propositional statements preceding their particular proofs. They are useful in reiterating

propositional themes after an intermittent period of extended argumentation. They refresh the memory of the audience and introduce the subsequent topic of discussion. Structurally, they highlight the divisions of the *argumentatio*.

The author's standard practice at transitional points throughout Colossians is to blend or cause an overlap between each part of the oration with its subsequent part. This trait is plainly visible also on the border areas of the second proof. 1:23 grammatically belongs with its preceding verses 21 and 22, and it does augment the theme of those verses. At the same time a shift in tone and theme is obvious. For the first time in the epistle an element of doubt, threat, or call to obligation has crept in. The discourse has turned from the grand accomplishments, love, and promises of God to the burdens and responsibilities of those who would obtain and maintain the fruits of divine opportunity. A similar blending is identifiable at the transition into the third proof (into its *anaskueue*), starting as early as 2:4. On the other hand, thematic elements of the second proof may be seen extending into 2:7. For this reason it is difficult to say with absolute confidence where one part ends and another begins. A case could be made, for example, for the theory that the third proof starts at 2:8 rather than at 2:6. These fluid transitions veil the harsh skeleton of the rhetorical disposition of parts.

So we see that tensions exist at the joints of transition between the individual *partes orationis* which the author has sought to balance. Like an oratorical Odysseus he must safely pilot his vessel of discourse between the Charybdis of concealment and the Scylla of revealment. In other words, the author needs to balance the

demand for clear transitional markers with the demand that they not be too apparent, since although they are needed to introduce new themes, assist the audience in following the course of argumentation, and the like, straightforward transitions can appear artless, harsh, and vulgar and can render a speech dry and dull. For the most part the author of Colossians has done well to create an almost seamless discourse that gently flows from one part to the next. In fact, if he can be faulted it is for providing too few markers strong enough to signal transitions (there is no strong signal, for example, to indicate the beginning of the *argumentatio* in 1:12).

This elaborated argument is characterized by a loose chiasmic structure, with a conceptual *inclusio*.¹ The conceptual *inclusio* begins in 1:23 with the proclamation of a monition that the audience should be careful to remain firm in their faith; it ends in 2:5 with the Apostle's declaration of his celebration of their order and firmness in the faith. Within this framework there is a rough chiasmic repetition of key terms such as "rejoice", "wealth", "mystery", et al. This argumentative structure may be visually represented as follows:

¹This is also recognized, though to a lesser extent, by Aletti, *Colossiens*, 130.

Conceptual *Inclusio*

εἰ γε ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἐδραῖοι καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι
ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (1:23)

Loose Chiastic Structure

χαίρω (1:24)

ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (1:24)

τῇ σαρκί (1:24)

γνωρίσαι (1:27)

πλοῦτος (1:27)

τοῦ μυστηρίου (1:27)

ἵνα παραστήσωμεν (1:28)

ἀγωνιζόμενος (1:29)

ἀγῶνα (2:1)

ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν (2:2)

πλοῦτος (2:2)

ἐπίγνωσιν (2:2)

τοῦ μυστηρίου (2:2)

τῇ σαρκὶ (2:5)

σὺν ὑμῖν (2:5)

χαίρων (2:5)

βλέπων ὑμῶν τὴν τάξιν καὶ τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν
(2:5)

Unlike the first argument which relied exclusively on epideictic as a medium for its logical, ethical, and emotional proofs, the second argument combines elements of both epideictic and deliberative. The main forms of proof in deliberative rhetoric are example and comparison of examples (not to be confused with epideictic comparison which with amplification forms the two most important forms of

epideictic proof).² Examples are suitable for exhortation,³ and this is what we find in the second proof of Colossians.

Proof from example involves induction. Examples may come from historical incidents, previous opinions (including such as proverbs), or they may be fictional (but credible), even taken from fables. Historical examples are usually the most persuasive, especially when the similarities between the historical situation and the contemporaneous situation are great.⁴

In the second argument Paul uses the historical example of his own life as a source of exhortation.⁵ He has faced many difficult situations and remained true to his call. He reminds his audience of their call with the expectation that they fulfill it. He draws them on with the carrot of reward if they remain faithful and threatens them with the stick of the loss of that treasure if they should give up the race. He reminds them how much he and God have given to bring them such grace—how foolish it would be for them to turn from it! These are intellectual (*logos*) and emotional (*pathos*) appeals. His personal example also provides powerful ethical appeal (*ethos*) derived as it is from the mouth of the venerated Apostle.

It should be remembered that one of the best (if not the best) source of ethical persuasion is the person of the speaker so that in the second elaborated

²See *ArRhet* 1,9,4; 2,20,7-8; 3,17,5; *RhetAlex* 32,1438b,29ff; *InstOr* 3,8,34+66.

³*InstOr* 5,11,10.

⁴See *ArRhet* 2,20; *RhetAlex* 7 and 8; *InstOr* 5,11; *DeInv* 1,30,49; Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 227-235; Martin, *Antike Rhetorik*, 119-124.

⁵It is typical for Paul to include autobiographical material in the body of his letters as well as to state and develop specific theological arguments. See White, *Body Grk Letter*, 43-93.

argument much of the power of the proof is derived from the author's autobiographical comments. Cicero advised:

We shall win good-will from our own person if we refer to our own acts and services without arrogance; if we weaken the effect of charges that have been preferred, or of some suspicion of less honorable dealing which has been cast upon us; if we dilate on the misfortunes which have befallen us or the difficulties which still beset us; if we use prayers and entreaties with a humble and submissive spirit.⁶

I will now briefly summarize the opinions of the rhetorical commentators on this section. As noted earlier, for Melanchthon 1:12-2:15 forms a *narratio* (the *prosopographia* for Christ inserted at 1:15 ends at 1:22). At 1:23 he notes a change of direction in the text: "up to this point, Paul has been defining the Gospel. Now he comes to the *circumstantia* under which the benefits shown in the Gospel come to us".⁷ 1:23-2:15 he sees as setting out the conditions for remaining in Christ.

According to Hatfield, 1:24-2:7 treats the topic of Paul's personal ministry. This is one of three sub-themes comprising the first half of the *probatio* which deals with theological instruction in 1:15-2:23. The other two sub-themes are the pre-eminence of Christ (1:15-23) and the dangers of heresy (2:8-23). The *probatio* itself stretches to 4:6.⁸

Aletti's division at this point is more complex. He sees 1:21-23 as a *partitio* attached to the end of the *exordium* (1:3-23). His *partitio* lists the themes which will

⁶*DeInv* 1,16,22: *Ab nostra, si de nostris factis et officiis sine arrogantia dicemus, si crimina illata et aliquas minus honestas suspiciones iniectas diluamus; si, quae incommoda acciderint aut quae instant difficultates, proferemus; si prece et obsecratione humili ac supplici utemur.*

⁷Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 43.

⁸Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 183f.

be treated in inverse order in the *probatio* (1:24-4:1). The first of these themes is Paul's struggle to preach the gospel (1:24-2:5), the second, faithfulness to the gospel received (2:6-23), and the third, the holiness of believers (3:1-4:1).⁹

The style of the second elaborated argument, like the first, could be classified as middle to grand. Although this argument is slightly less ornamented than the first, it is still thick with many of the same types of figures and tropes that prove the author's ability to write in the almost poetical form of prose of the first *ergasia*. The argumentative form of the second proof, however, is much weaker than the first and could even be called confused.

The introduction of the theme of perseverance at 1:23 acts as a means of transition between the first and second elaborated arguments. It recalls the "strengthened with all strength for all perseverance and endurance" listed as one of the objectives of the proposition in 1:11. The transition into the second proof begins with the argumentative figure of *admonitio* (*cataplexis*). The Apostle sets out conditions (εἰ γὰρ ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει) which amount to a perceived threat by the audience to their well-being. Paul implies that their status is not yet confirmed, but is dependent upon further compliance. This rhetorical device is useful in rousing an audience that is tired, bored, complacent, or arrogant.¹⁰ It places pressure upon the audience to carry out the speaker's will or face loss. Thus it appeals to the chief

⁹Aletti, *Colossiens*, 119-121.

¹⁰*InstOr* 4,1,33.

deliberative topics of advantage/disadvantage. The metonym *τῇ πίστει* substitutes an action for its object, providing here terse brevity. Remaining in the faith is next modified by three synonyms in the phrase *τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἐδραῖοι καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι*. This represents the figure of *hendiadys*, or more accurately *hendiatrix*, combined with the device of *polysyndeton*. This combination of devices slows the reader/listener and concentrates his or her mind upon the "no compromise" topic of perseverance, of the character qualities which the Apostle wants to see built up in his audience. A second case of metonymy follows, similar to the use of *τῇ πίστει*, in the words *τῆς ἐλπίδος*. Again an action (or attitude of heart) is substituted for its object, in this case the undefined gains and goods promised in the gospel. But this time the purpose of the device is not so much brevity as the communication of the emotive attitude the word hope conveys (*pathos*). In 1:23 the gospel itself is amplified by three definitive clauses: *οὐ ἠκούσατε, τοῦ κηρυχθέντος...*, *οὐ ἐγενόμην...*. This amplification by accumulation (*congeries*) of definitives intensifies concentration upon the gospel, defines what is intended by the word "gospel", and can be seen as establishing reasons for remaining faithful to it. In particular, the phrase *οὐ ἠκούσατε*, following the admonition to remain faithful, places the audience under pressure. The tradition and their honor are at stake. They have received the true gospel and will be held accountable should they abandon it.

The phrase *ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν* is highly figurative. The first figure we encounter is *hyperbole* with the adjective *πάσῃ*. "Creature" is an

instance of the figure of *metonymia* (or possibly *synechdoche*) with its substitution of the general (creature) for the specific (human). "Under heaven" is also a metonymy which has replaced the name of a place by a description of its position. All of these figures magnify the universal nature of the gospel, reinforcing its character as the only legitimate one. There is no alternative gospel. The verse ends with the combination of an emphatic pronoun with a personal name and an *epithet*: ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος. These devices highlight a new element of the argumentation, the example of Paul as faithful servant of the gospel. They form the basis of an argument from the greater to the lesser: the great Apostle submits himself obediently and has remained faithful in spite of great tribulations, how much more should then the audience. The appeal is both ethical (drawing from the person of the Apostle) and logical (leaving it to the audience to infer the intended conclusion).

1:23 represents another interesting instance of the writer's ability to employ *expolitio*. He sets out his theme (remain in the faith), amplifies it with a series of synonyms (grounded and firm and not being moved), then restates the theme in a new way (not being moved from the hope of the gospel), and amplifies it again with qualifying definitions (which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, have become a servant).

There is an expansion at 1:24 of the theme of Paul's faithfulness introduced at the end of 1:23. The rhetorical figures in 1:24 are mostly found towards the end of the verse. The conjunction καὶ functions almost as a figure of *anthimeria* where

its usual grammatical function is probably replaced by one suggesting explanation ("because I fill up").¹¹ There is an instance of *metonymia* in the word *σαρκί*, where substance has been substituted for the object, "body". As at 1:18, so here in 1:24 Botha claims¹² to find a metonymy in the words *τοῦ σώματος* (= congregation). Again, this is probably not the best classification. It is better seen here as an instance of *metaphora*, in particular an analogical metaphor (**Christ:Church** as **Head:Body**). The phrase *ὁ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία* is a figure of *epergesis*, which functions to explain the intended meaning of the preceding metaphor.

For the most part the rhetorical figures in this verse serve to give stylistic variety and ornamentation and so are truly figures of speech as opposed to figures of thought.¹³ Argumentative appeal in 1:24 is made to both *ethos* and *logos*. Ethical appeal derives from the person of Paul whose suffering is "for you" (advantage) and is identified with Christ's continuing work. Logical appeal again derives from an argument from the greater to the lesser: Christ was faithful in suffering, Paul is faithful in suffering, therefore the Colossians should be faithful in suffering. Suffering benefits you as individuals and the church, therefore do not give up in the face of trials.

The amplification of the theme of Paul's faithfulness continues in 1:25 with

¹¹M. Cahill, "The Neglected Parallelism in Colossians 1,24-25," *ETL* 68 (1992), 142-147, proposes that the phrase *ἀντανάπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα* in 1:24 should be read in conjunction with the parallel *πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον* in 1:25. 1:24 is to be understood to refer to messianic woes and 1:25 to the universal preaching which is to be accomplished.

¹²Botha, "Stylistic Analysis", 243.

¹³See *InstOr* 9,1,10ff.

the repetition of the phrase *ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος* with its emphatic pronoun and accompanying *epithet* but without repetition of Paul's name. The expression *τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ* contains a *synechdoche*: the part, "word", designates the whole written/spoken message. Because it is an idiomatic expression, it probably has no special rhetorical function here. The argumentative emphasis at this point switches to the appeal to divine motivation/justification. The ministry in which he labors and suffers is a ministry established by God. That it benefit the Colossians is willed by God. Therefore by inference suffering is part of God's plan.

In 1:26 the author returns again to more figurative language. The phrase *τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον...* explains and expands upon the meaning of "the word" in 1:25 (the figure of *epergesis*), while the term *τὸ μυστήριον* acts as a figure of metonymy, substituting a characteristic of a thing for the thing itself.

A device of balance and rhythm, *isocolon*, occurs in the expression *ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν*, as do the figures of *repetitio*, metonymy, and *hendiadys*. The device of *antithesis* is also effectively used to contrast the previous condition of ignorance with the present condition of special insight. This figure is intensified by the use of an *anacoluthon*—the breaking of the sequence of thought—which arrests the attention of the audience. The *epithet* *τοῖς ἁγίοις* is too common in Pauline terminology to be allowed special rhetorical significance here.

We find the figure of *antiptosis* (or possibly *antimereia*) in 1:27 in the expression *τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης* giving a meaning such as "wonderfully rich

glory". This peculiar use of τὸ πλοῦτος as the abundance of the thing mentioned is metaphoric. The metonymy "mystery" again appears. The phrase ὃ ἐστίν... consists in a figure of *epergesis* as it offers an explanation of the previous statement. The following phrase ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης is likewise a figure of *epergesis*, in this case an explanation of the previous explanation. It is possible that this expression represents another case of the figure of *antiptosis*, thus leading to a meaning such as "glorious hope", or τῆς δόξης could be acting as a figure of metonymy providing an interpretation such as "promise of glorification". As elsewhere in the epistle ἡ ἐλπὶς is a metonym resulting from the substitution of an attitude for the object which creates it, i.e. "promise" or "promised inheritance".

In 1:26-27 the audience is reminded of the important and unique nature of the gospel event in which they are participating. The method used is epideictic amplification of the nature of the gospel. The gospel is described with words like "riches", "glory", "hope" and is identified with the indwelling of Christ. The divine origin of its arrival among the Colossians is stressed. The grand significance of its revelation is pictured in the figures of *antithesis* and in the startling disclosure of its coming to gentiles. The purpose of these lines of epideictic is to heighten the stakes, to remind the Colossians of how much would be lost should they fail to persevere. There is also an element of shaming employed: God did not reveal this great act of grace to Abraham or to Moses or to David, he revealed it to you Colossians, who furthermore are even gentiles! What ultimate tragedy it would be for those who

were outside the covenant of grace to let slip from their hands a greater grace because they failed to treasure its significance!

Verse 28 is characterized by exaggeration. The *hyperbole* "all/every" is repeated four times creating a figure of *hypozeuxis*. The phrase πάντα ἄνθρωπον is repeated three times as the object of two participles and a verb creating a figure of *epistrophe*, a device useful for emphasis, melody, and progression of thought. The *hyperbole* is continued by the adjective τέλειον. The metaphorical use of παραστήσωμεν occurs, repeating the thought expressed in 1:22 which highlights the transitional element of that verse. The word "preach", καταγγέλλομεν, is amplified by its two following explanatory (*epergesis*) participial clauses: νουθετοῦντες...καὶ διδάσκοντες. The Apostle's desire is indirectly expressed through telic ἵνα creating a secondary figure of *optatio*, a device of argumentation useful in influencing an audience's will and promoting a course of action. Appeal is again made to the chief topics of advantage and disadvantage with the mention of warning and the promise of perfection, although indirectly. The audience is made aware that much is at stake, and they are encouraged to conform to the tradition.

The repetition of the stem in ἐνέργειαν...ἐνεργουμένην results in a figure of *derivatio*, which provides melodious ornamentation and emphasis upon the meaning of "work" shared by the two words and further amplified by the addition of ἐν δυνάμει (which is itself a case of *antimereia*). The author in this statement identifies God as the source, the ultimate proof. The participial phrase ἀγωνιζόμενος... forms yet another figure of *epergesis* with its explanatory role.

The verse is further embellished by the repetition *ἐν...ἐν* which also forms part of an alliteration: *ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν....*

2:1 begins with a clear figure of *optatio* expressed by the verb *θέλω*. The mention of personal suffering strengthens the pathetic force of the verse. The *enumeratio* of three indirect objects as beneficiaries of his sufferings appeals to and increases authorial *ethos*. The mood is further emphasized by the device of *polysyndeton* (*καὶ...καὶ*) which makes the list of beneficiaries seem longer and more impressive. The figure of *circumlocutio* appears in the phrase *τὸ πρόσωπόν μου*, with "my face" = "me". *Ἐν σαρκί* is a metonymy signifying "physical" while the entire verbal phrase *ἐώρακαν...σαρκί* comprises an idiomatic expression meaning "met me personally".

An epistolary analysis of Colossians might identify the phrase "for I want you to know" in 2:1 as a "disclosure formula" revealing the theme of the letter and introducing its body.¹⁴ Against 2:1 forming the introduction to the body of the letter is the size of the work as a whole. It would imply an introduction which encompassed almost one half of the epistle. Although this is certainly possible, it is unlikely due to the positive force of the letter (a long introduction would better suit an *insinuatio*). Furthermore, although 2:1 occurs at the center (along with 1:29) of the loose chiasm described above, the point of emphasis should probably be seen not at the center but at the "wings" of the *chiasmus* in the re-statements of the

¹⁴White, *Light*, 207, claims that by the Roman period it was common for the disclosure formula both to mark the formal opening of an epistle's body and to present "the explicit explanation of the reason for writing".

propositio in 1:23 and 2:5. Moreover, if 2:1 is to be seen as revealing the main epistolary theme, then it is a very short lived theme indeed since Paul's sufferings are not mentioned again after 2:1!¹⁵ Therefore, a better source for an epistolary disclosure formula revealing the theme and introducing the body is in fact the first statement of the *propositio* in 1:9-12 where the author clearly discloses his intent and the *dispositio* of his arguments through the report of his and his companions' prayers.¹⁶

In 2:2 ἵνα continues the device of *optatio* begun in 2:1. The figure of *synechdoche* in the expression αἱ καρδίαι is too common an idiom to warrant special attention. The καὶ εἰς following the participial phrase συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ is open to interpretation (as attested by its omission from certain manuscripts), and may identify an *anacoluthon*. This is a device common in spoken language and it gives the text here a more oral, even personal air. The word πλοῦτος is likewise an *idiom* signifying "abundance". The conjunction καί has been omitted before εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν to effect a figure of *asyndeton* which leaves the statement shorter and emphasizes "knowledge". As previously, the word μυστηρίου is a metonym. Also of difficulty in this verse is the juxtapositioning of the words

¹⁵The theme of the apostle's suffering may certainly be a theme about which he wishes to inform his audience, but it is not the main theme of the epistle. It may, however, have been a topic more thoroughly dealt with by Paul's messenger and representative, Tychicus, who "will tell you all the news about me" (4:7,9).

¹⁶This is a clear demonstration of how the two methods of rhetorical criticism and epistolary analysis when working together can produce a sounder interpretation of a letter's structure than one method used in isolation. Such an approach has recently been applied more fully on the epistle to the Philippians by D.F. Watson, "The Integration of Epistolary and Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians," in *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 398-426.

θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ creating, probably unintentionally, a figure of *amphibologia*, the ambiguity of which is highlighted by the numerous textual variants.

The term *θησαυροὶ* is a synonym for *πλοῦτος* of the preceding verse and likewise a metaphorical figure as is the word *ἀπόκρυφοι* which continue the amplification of the thought. *Hendiadys* (or alternatively *synonymia*) occurs in the words *σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως*. The idea of the verse implies a *paradoxon* with its talk of hidden treasures which are revealed in Christ. 2:2-3 amplify the concept of "knowledge".

Another example of *expolitio* is visible in 2:2-3. The author introduces the concept of gaining an abundance of assurance through understanding. An amplification is then introduced by a repetition of *εἰς* and a synonym, "knowledge", of the idea of "understanding". Next the concept of abundance is re-introduced by another synonym along with the additional "understanding" synonyms, "wisdom and knowledge". This conceptual augmentation can be more clearly seen in the following outline:

εἰς	πάν πλοῦτος	τῆς συνέσεως
εἰς		ἐπίγνωσιν
	πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ	τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως

Due to its brevity, 2:4 contains little embellishment. As in 1:28 *ἵνα* expresses the author's desire and so produces a figure of *optatio* which, as above, is useful in influencing audience will and behavior in accomplishing the author's deliberative purpose.

In the declarative statement *τοῦτο λέγω, ἵνα μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς παραλογίζηται*

in 2:4 we find not only an argument in support of the second proof, but also transitional material in preparation for the *refutatio* of the third proof, and suggestions of connections here with the "third statement of the proposition" which introduces the third proof. Mention of avoiding being tripped up by deceivers presages the attacks of the *refutatio* in the coming verses. The phrase *τοῦτο λέγω, ἵνα...* looks back to the immediately preceding verses (2:1-3) and elucidates their purpose: what the Apostle has written is to prepare his audience to resist threats to their faith, to equip them to persevere. It would appear from their shared topics of concern that the content of the *refutatio* has a role to play in effecting this goal in the audience.

The word *γὰρ* in 2:5 introduces an explanation or justification of the preceding statement of 2:4. The expression *τῇ σαρκὶ* is repeated once again (cf. 1:24; 2:1), this time with the meaning "bodily", "in body". The first two clauses of this verse form a figure of *isocolon*, giving balance and rhythm. Helping to give the *isocolon* its balance is a double figure of *antithesis* in the contrasts drawn between *τῇ σαρκὶ* and *τῷ πνεύματι* as well as between *ἄπειμι* and *σὺν...εἰμι*. The phrase *χαίρων καὶ βλέπων* forms a true figure of *hendiadys* with the two participles joining together to create the meaning "rejoicing to see". The vivid image painted by these participles in the minds of the audience forms the pathetic figure of *demonstratio* (or *descriptio*; *ἐνάργεια*, *ὑποτύπωσις*). The audience can almost visualize the author's presence and hear his joy.

This verse recapitulates the theme of perseverance which defines the second

proof, while simultaneously the mention of this theme and that of good order serve to smooth the transition into the third proof, because of the natural crossover point between perseverance and obedience and the attack on the false ways provided in the *refutatio* of the third elaborated argument. The thought of 1:23 of remaining firm in the faith is repeated in new words to close the proof.

The evidence given in the second proof of the example of Paul to encourage perseverance can be summarized under the following heads:

I rejoice in suffering for you, because: (proofs)

- it is an opportunity to imitate Christ/do the work of God
- it is beneficial for you/the church
- it is the ministry given me by God
- it is part of God's plan now revealed in Christ
- it is the way to glory/abundance
- it is the way to perfection/maturity in Christ
- God is behind this, working in us
- it is for your encouragement, assurance, knowledge
- it keeps you from being misled
- it makes me happy to see you persevere, so continue!

The proposition to the *refutatio* in 2:6 also serves as an *exhortatio* following the body of the second proof: Therefore (*οὖν*), as you have begun, now continue: rooted, built up, established, as taught, overflowing with thanksgiving.

Finally, in spite of its semi-chiastic structure, the second proof lacks the cohesive progression of the first and almost seems to wander. The thoughts and grammatical structures are rough and at times disjointed, as witnessed by instances of *anacoluthon* and *amphibologia*. It is hard to say at times what the topic of the

subject is: the gospel? Paul's ministry? perseverance? Up to this point of our study it is the weakest part of the letter. The passage should strengthen audience good-will towards the author through its concentration upon the ethical qualities of his person and elements of it do prepare for the third proof. Audience attentiveness should also be stirred by the figures of *admonitio* and *optatio* and the author's return to first person personal details. Perhaps the finest element of this section is the author's ability to embellish his discourse and create extensive *expositio* of ideas.

IV.C.3. Third Elaborated Argument (2:6-4:6)

IV.C.3.a. The Introduction

The first proposition of the *partitio* of the *propositio* in 1:10, the double proposition of "bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God", is elaborated upon and defended here in the third proof of the *argumentatio*. This third and last elaborated argument is by far the largest and most complex of the proofs. It is the only one of the proofs which can be divided into the argumentative subdivisions of the refutation of opposing arguments (*refutatio*/ἀνασκευή; dissuasion, apotreptic) and the confirmation of one's own (*confirmatio*/κατασκευή; persuasion, protreptic). In this it takes on the form of argumentation by comparison (*comparatio*/σύγκρισις). It is a comparison of the two ways, of the world versus Christ (2:8), of physical circumcision versus spiritual circumcision (2:11), of shadow versus substance (2:17), of things above versus things below (3:2), of the old man versus the new man (3:5,10). The *refutatio* runs from 2:6-23 with the *confirmatio* picking up at 3:1 and running through 4:6.

The third elaborated argument combines epideictic and deliberative elements, vituperation and exhortation. It reminds the audience of certain of their common values, calling for the preservation and deepening of what already exists, which are epideictic concerns. But it also seeks further changes in the audience's behavior and thus shows its deliberative essence.

There is more than one way of examining this section of the proof. It could be argued that at this point in Colossians the *argumentatio* becomes an extended *exhortatio*.² Or it may be analyzed as a series of elaborated arguments of one sort or another. The presence of confirmation and refutation may be rejected,³ as may even be that of *argumentatio*.

For Melanchthon, the section running through 2:15 is still part of the *narratio*. More specifically, 1:23-2:15 comprises a *circumstantia* which sets out the conditions governing receipt of the benefits of the gospel. As noted earlier, Melanchthon curiously considers 2:16-19 as an abbreviated form of *peroratio* (an *epilogus* or *conclusio*): "He appends an *epilogus* about ceremonies and the Mosaic polity and about human traditions."⁴ This epilogue he holds to contain a *locus* on the Christian's freedom from observance of the law and human traditions. Melanchthon follows his epilogue with an "explanation" of the *conclusio* covering 2:20-23, the theme of which is that "Christian righteousness requires the putting to death of the flesh".⁵ Within this section he identifies a *locus* on honoring the body at 2:23. All of what follows the additions to the *epilogus* (that is, 3:1 through 4:6 where he concludes his commentary) is taken up with the topic of moral precepts: "Paul taught in the first two chapters how we are justified....in the following

²Apparently this is how Hatfield sees 3:1-4:6 although he does not plainly so state. See *InstOr* 3,6,47; 9,2,103.

³None of the other rhetorical commentators notes either confirmation or refutation for this section.

⁴Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 64.

⁵*Ibid.*, 68.

chapters he deals with moral precepts".⁶ At 3:9ff he finds a *locus* on the theme of the old man versus the new.⁷ Finally, with his identification of a *locus* on peace in 3:15 Melanchthon's specifically rhetorical comments on the epistle cease.⁸

As noted previously, for Hatfield the first section of the *probatio* which deals with theological instruction (1:15-2:23) is divided into three parts, the first on the preeminence of Christ (1:15-23), the second on Paul's personal ministry (1:24-2:7), and the third on the dangers of heresy (2:8-23). The second section of the *probatio* he regards as a *partitio* dealing with practical instruction (3:1-4:6). This he subdivides into five parts, the first dealing with seeking the things above (3:1-4), the second with putting off the vices of sin (3:5-11), the third with putting on the virtues of grace (3:12-17), the fourth on household rules (3:18-4:1), and the fifth on prayer and behavior towards outsiders (4:2-6).⁹ None of these many sub-divisions does Hatfield call an elaborated argument, they are for him apparently simply topical discussions.

According to Hatfield, Paul in the paraenetic section (3:1-4:6) turns to the exhortation of the church in their everyday lives. He uses imperatives to introduce each sub-theme of the parenesis. For Hatfield 3:1-4 stands as an important transitional piece because it concludes the doctrinal section and introduces the practical section. In 3:5-11 a 'negative' parenesis begins with the imperative

⁶Ibid. 87.

⁷Ibid., 93ff.

⁸Ibid., 101f.

⁹Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 182f.

νεκρώσατε.¹⁰ Here vices are portrayed against a backdrop of divine judgement in 3:6. The third section of the paraenesis in 3:12-17 begins with the imperative ἐνδύσασθε. With its contrasting list of positive commands it forms the antithesis to the preceding section. Together they show the progression (through enumeration) and cohesion (through the repetition of imperatives) of the argumentation. Hatfield believes that the fourth section in 3:18-4:1 involves the expansion of the command of 3:17 to do all things in the name of Jesus. The household rules are the fulfillment of that imperative expressed in three pairs of reciprocal exhortations to wives and husbands, children and fathers, and slaves and masters. The imperatives of the final section in 4:2-6 are rather straightforward: pray and behave properly.¹¹

Aletti's *probatio* which runs from 1:24-4:1 is divided into three arguments: Paul's struggle to proclaim the gospel (1:24-2:5), faithfulness to the gospel received (2:6-23), and the holiness of believers (3:1-4:1). In the second argument of his *probatio* he identifies a chiastic structure. The argument begins with initial general exhortations (2:6-7), moves to a warning about cultic practice (2:8), then to christological supporting arguments at the center of the chiastic structure (2:9-15), before returning to the theme of warnings (2:16-19), and concluding with final exhortations (2:20-23). As generally throughout his commentary, apart from its place in his rhetorical outline of the letter and its rhetorical structure, Aletti mentions little more regarding the rhetorical nature of 2:6-23. There is no mention

¹⁰Although he describes this passage as 'negative', Hatfield does not apply the term *refutatio* to it.

¹¹Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 183-185.

of *refutatio* or *confirmatio* or talk of elaborated arguments. His concern is mainly with the stock questions of historical criticism. The third argument of his *probatio*, on the holiness of believers, he sees as beginning with the statement of introductory principles (3:1-4) which are then developed in the succeeding verses (3:5-17). This development he finds also to be chiastically structured. It commences with exhortations to mortify the earthly man (3:5-9a), moves to the christological motivation for this mortification (3:9b-11), and then returns to exhortations to live the new life in Christ (3:12-17). The argument concludes with the addition of a section of exhortations for familial and domestic life (3:18-4:1). In Aletti's opinion 4:2-6 consists of final exhortations with a perorational function, expanding upon the entire section (3:1-4:1) as a form of conclusion.

Returning to our outline of the third proof of the *argumentatio*, not only can it be divided into a *refutatio* and a *confirmatio*, but these sub-parts themselves can be further divided into elaborated arguments each formulated around its own topic of argumentation.¹² There are several clear examples of such elaborated sub-

¹²These elaborated arguments in the third proof bear resemblance to the *topos* of form criticism. See, for example, Mullins, T.Y. "Topos as a New Testament Form" *JBL* 99 (1980), 541-47; Bradley, D.G. "The Topos as a Form in the Pauline Paraenesis" *JBL* 72 (1953), 238-46; and Brunt, J.C. "More on the Topos as a New Testament Form" *JBL* 104 (1985), 495-500. The definition of the term *topos* as used by form critics differs from its classical use. For the ancients a *topos* is a place or category where an argument can be found and these may be of two types: the common topic or "commonplace" (*locus communis/τόπος*) and the specific topic (*locus proprius/ἴδιος*). A commonplace is where arguments applicable to every genre and topic of rhetoric can be found; a specific topic is where arguments applicable only to a particular genre or topic of rhetoric can be found (see *ArRhet* 1,2,21; *AdHer* 2,6,9; *DeInv* 2,15,48). As used by form critics, *topos* often refers to a specific literary form commonly used in antiquity for general ethical instruction (Bradley, "Topos", 240). Mullins describes such a *topos* as consisting of three essential elements: "an injunction urging that a certain course of behavior be followed or avoided; a reason for the injunction; and a discussion of the logical or practical consequences of the behavior" (Mullins, "Topos", 542). A *topos* may also make use of one or both of two optional elements: "an analogous situation to the one dealt with in the *topos*", and a "refutation of a contrary way of thinking or

arguments in chapters 2 and 3 of Colossians. The entire proof (2:6-4:6) can be seen as consisting of seven elaborated topics, the first on avoiding deceitful philosophy (2:6-15), the second on maintaining Christian freedom (2:16-23), the third on seeking heavenly things (3:1-4), the fourth on putting to death vices (3:5-11), the fifth on putting on virtues (3:12-17), the sixth on maintaining domestic harmony (3:18-4:1), and the seventh on practicing Christian vigilance (4:2-6). That is not to say that these are all equal to one another. There is a hierarchy within both refutation and confirmation. The second topical argument of the refutation derives from and is subordinate to the first. Similarly, the first topical argument in the confirmation introduces all the following arguments.

Before the commencement of any elaborated arguments, however, there is a re-statement of the first proposition of the *partitio* that precedes the third proof in 2:6-7. This plays the same role as the re-statement of the second proposition before the second proof in 1:23, refreshing the mind of the audience and introducing them to the new proof. The original double proposition in 1:10 expressed the desire that the Colossians would bear fruit in every good work and grow in the knowledge of God. Here the emphasis on conduct is expressed by the metaphorical verb *περιπατεῖτε* in 2:6 while the emphasis on knowledge is less clearly confirmed by the verb *ἐδιδάχθητε* in 2:7, although from the content of the following proof it is clearly a topic treated. An *ellipsis* has occurred with the omission of *οὕτως* after *ὥς* in the comparative phrase of 2:6. This strengthens emphasis on the imperative.

acting" (ibid., 542-3). It would appear that what Mullins describes as a *topos* is nothing other than an elaborated argument developed from a deliberative injunction.

Although the four participles of 2:7 are syntactically related to the imperative *περιπατεῖτε* of the previous verse which introduces the third proof, their main function should not be seen as epexegetical of that verb, but as a *recapitulatio* of the topics of the first and second proof: *ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ βεβαιούμενοι τῇ πίστει* restates the theme of the second elaborated argument while *περισσεύοντες ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ* summarizes the first. The two verses together, therefore, review the progress of the argument to this point and introduce the next theme to be treated immediately. This is helpful in keeping the minds of the listeners focused on the progression of the argumentation. It provides a visible framework with "stages" (like mile posts along a journey) all of which makes the oration clearer and easier to follow and thereby more pleasant and persuasive. Once again Paul has used the devices of *polysyndeton* (*καὶ...καὶ*) and metaphor in the first half of 2:7 and *asyndeton* in the second to achieve ornamentation and emphasis. The transition into the third proof is now complete, having been foreshadowed as early as 2:4.

IV.C.3.b. The *Refutatio* (2:6-23)

The refutation of the false way consists of two main themes, avoiding being drawn away from Christ (2:8-15) and maintaining Christian liberty (2:16-23).¹³

¹³Thomas, *Chiasmus*, 152, sees a chiastic structure in 2:6-19 (which he calls a key passage in a complex letter): "the chiastic center [at 2:12] suggests that Paul's focus lies, not so much in the combatting of a particular syncretistic heretical system, but in the less specific, although equally important, encouragement of believers to walk aright in the light of Christ's death and resurrection, and their identification with those actions"—a conclusion quite in line with the complex *stasis* identified in the *propositio*.

Both of these elaborated topics is characterized by the combination of *admonitio* with *ratiocinatio* which is heavy with vituperative epideictic. The first of these topics contains a single admonition followed by a double enthymeme as a statement of proof which is then elaborated upon by the use of *amplificatio* and *expositio*. The second topic is slightly more complex. It consists of a double admonition divided by an interposed enthymematic statement and followed by more enthymemes and amplification.

The first elaborated sub-argument of the *refutatio* (2:8-15), on the topic of avoiding being deceived away from Christ, begins with an injunction warning the audience to beware of being led astray by deceitful philosophy: βλέπετε μὴ τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν. This injunction defines in part the imperative of 2:6, ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε, functioning epexegetically. Beware of empty arguments! Don't be taken prisoner by vain philosophy! That is how you will continue to walk in Christ. The vituperative epideictic element is already quite apparent in the *figurae* which embellish the idea. The first figure to occur is one of *hyperbaton* (or *anastrophe*) involving the juxtapositioning of τις and ὑμᾶς where normal word order would have been μὴ τις ἔσται ὑμᾶς. This intensifies the imperative, highlighting the threat facing the audience. This is followed by a military metaphor in the word συλαγωγῶν, taking captive or spoils of war. This vivid, emotive metaphor portrays the unwary as

carried off from truth and salvation into the slavery of error. The phrase *φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης* represents a *hendiadys* with the terms "philosophy and empty deceit" signifying empty, deceptive philosophy. The adjectival result (empty, deceptive) establishes or reinforces a value judgement, an opinion, about these enemy ideas, in this case a negative one, a technique known as coloring (*color*, *χρῶμα*).¹⁴ The negative amplification continues with a triple *κατὰ anaphora*, joining three qualifying clauses onto the injunction in the form of three prepositional phrases:

- (1) *κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων*
- (2) *κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*¹⁵
- (3) *καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν*

These prepositional phrases explain why the Colossians should beware of *φιλοσοφία* and *κενὴ ἀπάτη*. Although the reason is set forth as threefold, it is actually a single argument, namely the argument of origin. The opposing views are characterized as originating with men (*κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων*), as originating with the cosmos/creation (*κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*), as not originating with Christ (*καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν*). The Apostle has chosen to utilize amplification of this idea of origins in order to magnify the weight and force of his admonition. Instead of

¹⁴*InstOr* 4,2,94.

¹⁵The interpretation of *στοιχεῖα* is of course disputed. Rusam, D. "Neue Belege zu den *στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* (Gal. 4,3,9; Kol. 2,8,20)," *ZNW* 83 (1992), 119-125, concludes after a thorough examination of all occurrences of the phrase that it must refer to the four (or five) physical elements (fire, earth, water, air). On the other hand, C.E. Arnold, "Returning to the Domain of the Powers: *Stoicheia* as Evil Spirits in Gal. 4:3,9," *NovT* 38 (1996), 55-76, proposes that *στοιχεῖα* are best interpreted as evil spirits, equivalent to "principalities and powers" (Col. 1:16).

blandly stating that such concepts do not come from Christ, he has fortified his contention by inflation.

An *antithesis* is created by the juxtaposition of two "positive" descriptions (according to human tradition, according to the elements of the world) beside a single "negative" (and not according to Christ). Human and worldly proof may be powerful, but in the Christian value system they are empty beside the proof of Christ. The emotive element (*pathos*) of the *κατὰ* phrases is intensified by the figure of *asyndeton*, with omission of the conjunction between the first two "*κατὰ*" phrases and by the *antithesis* which occurs not only between the first two "*κατὰ*" phrases and the third, but also between *τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων* (2:8) and *...τῇ πίστει καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε* (2:7). Here the tradition of men is counterposed to the tradition (faith) of the church. All of this adds to the urgency, intensity, and seriousness of the passage.

In 2:9-10 begins the *ratiocinatio*, the reasoning in support of the admonition of 2:8. It consists of a double enthymeme introduced by causal *ὅτι* and joined by the conjunction *καὶ*: *ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς, καὶ ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας*. The first reason is founded upon the nature of Christ: *ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατα οικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς*. This is an argument of superiority: the revelation of Christ, in case there were any doubts, is certainly superior to the traditions of men or the elements of the cosmos because Christ is divine. This is, therefore, primarily a logical appeal (*logos*) based on the tradition

of the divinity of the person of Christ; it is an appeal to the authority and trustworthy character of the tradition. Secondly the proof may also be seen as an appeal to a divine witness, the most weighty, the most reliable, the most to be believed of all evidence (if also the most difficult to prove, though here Paul assumes that it is already fully believed by his audience). This should be a powerful proof in his listeners' minds. The emphatic position of ἐν αὐτῷ and the unnecessary expansion of πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα (a figure of *pleonasmus* with πλήρωμα also functioning as a *synecdoche*) place especial emphasis on the core idea of the argument, Christ's unique nature. The topic was first introduced at 1:19 in the eulogy for the Son and is developed further here.

The second reason given for his admonition is founded upon an assumed historical incident in the lives of the audience: καὶ ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι (2:10). The perfect participle indicates here a past event which has continuing results. The Colossians were made complete by Christ at their conversion or baptism and continue complete to the time of writing. As with the first reason, Paul does not set out to prove this statement. He assumes that his audience will recognize this as a fact, a shared belief. Like the first, this proof has the characteristics of an enthymeme. It is a logical argument, an abbreviated syllogism, not fully set forth for the sake of speed and effect, being partially based upon shared assumptions and partially spelled out in the text. The phrase is embellished by a figure of *derivatio* (or *polyptoton*) with πεπληρωμένοι playing upon πλήρωμα of the preceding verse.

Amplification further strengthens this second reason through the addition of

the modifying relative phrase ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, confirming once again the extent of Christ's power. As a figure of *epergesis* it defines αὐτῷ. Christ, the author of the faith of the Church, the One who embodies the Divine, the One who has made the Colossians complete, is here straightforwardly presented as superior to the highest and most exalted figures of the φιλοσοφία καὶ κενὴ ἀπάτη, the ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἐξουσίαι. Paul here undercuts the ethical authority of these powers by re-iterating Christ's superiority over them. Paul again uses the metonymy of κεφαλὴ to express this as in 1:18. The *synonymia* (or *hendiadys*) of ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας is also a repeat from the Christ hymn, this time from 1:16. The repetition of elements of the *encomium* for Christ will further remind the audience of Christ's majesty and power, thereby helping to strengthen the proof even more. Two other figures reminiscent of the Christ hymn which run throughout this first elaborated topic are two instances of *hypozeuxis* in the multiplying of occurrences of πάν and αὐτός (or alternatively ὅς) thus emphasizing these two aspects at every appearance.

What follows in 2:11-15 is entirely amplification of the two reasons given in 2:9-10. To a large extent this amplification is *expositio* since in these verses Paul is not always presenting completely new points, but rather to a great degree is simply re-stating the same points in new ways. Being complete in Christ is defined through the metaphors of being spiritually circumcised, buried in baptism, and raised in baptism. The fulness of divinity in Christ is demonstrated by the Father's

actions through Christ in forgiveness of sins, cancellation of debt, and the disarming of the opposing powers. Each of these elements is itself amplified.

The amplification in 2:11-15 is heavily reliant upon metaphors, of which there is an immediate avalanche. The metaphor of circumcision forms the basis of the argument in 2:11, the metaphor of death and resurrection in 2:12 and 13. 2:14 contains the rather strange combination of the metaphors of debt and crucifixion while 2:15 changes to the metaphor of a war triumph.

The amplification by definition of completeness in Christ begins in 2:11 with the statement ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε. Like the second enthymeme, this amplification is founded upon the appeal to an assumed historical spiritual event. The initial statement is then amplified by three explanatory phrases: 1) περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ, 2) ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, 3) ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The metaphor of circumcision which Paul has chosen to use to explain why the Colossians are complete in Christ needs to be defined. It is not physical circumcision he is talking about. It is a circumcision performed "without hands". This is a figure of *synechdoche*, the understood subject of the action being God. The circumcision which God has performed on the Colossians did not involve the removal of their foreskins but rather the "removal of the body of their flesh". There is a combination of figures here. "Flesh" refers to the carnal sinful nature of man by way of a figure of metonymy. "Body" could signify the portion of that which is cut away, thus "the whole of the sin nature". Or the combination of the words together could produce the meaning of "the fleshly body" and thus a reading

such as "the removal of your sinful nature" via a figure of *antiptosis*.¹⁶ It seems clear that what Paul is discussing here is the circumcision of the heart, the internal true mark of the covenant (Deut 10:16). This type of circumcision is further defined as "the circumcision of Christ" (an explanatory figure of *epergesis*), the mark of the covenant for the followers of Jesus. The repetition within the verse of περιτομῇ represents a figure of *iteratio*.

It is possible, though not absolutely necessary, that this verse is directly refuting a certain teaching and practice of circumcision within an opposed philosophy. The two types of circumcision, physical and spiritual, are displayed in close *antithesis* which magnifies the diversity of their character, strengthens the credibility of Paul's proof (reason), and demeans not only the rationale (λόγος) of a possible opponents' teaching, but also their personal character and reliability (ἥθος). If this is the case, then Paul is using what is apparently his opponents' own conceived strength against them. They claim a spiritual authority, a spiritual teaching, a spiritual empowerment, but Paul exposes them as reliant upon the physical and confirmed by men, in contrast to the religious life of the Pauline Christians which derives from God. Whatever the reality of the situation, this amplification relies upon the commonplace (*locus communis*) of the superiority of the spiritual/divine over the human/physical.

The amplification of being complete in Christ continues in 2:12 with the aorist passive participial phrase συνταφέντες αὐτῷ which is then defined by the

¹⁶Bauer (*Rhetoricae Paullinae.*, vol.2, 487) considers this a figure of *metalepsis*.

amplification ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ. This is a refinement of the metaphor of circumcision in 2:11 by a metaphor of death/burial. The means of the audience's spiritual circumcision was Christ's death. They participated with him in his death. That is, their sin nature, the body of their flesh, was metaphorically put to death with Christ. Although the metaphor speaks of being buried with Christ it is understood that the one who is buried has also died, and this idea finds support in the refinement below in 2:13. Their death occurred at baptism, perhaps with the inference that baptism has replaced circumcision as a sign of the covenant.

The next amplification of completeness in Christ follows immediately in the metaphorical phrase ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε, which is elaborated upon by the prepositional phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. This metaphor carries the idea of the Colossians' spiritual circumcision still further so that we can see how the author is building up his argument one step at a time (amplification by augmentation; *incrementum*). We discover that not only has their sin nature been put to death, but that they have been raised to new life by participating in Christ's resurrection. The means by which this has been accomplished is their faith in God's power of resurrection. The final phrase which is descriptive of God, τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν, supports the validity of the object of the audience's faith. Christ's resurrection is proof of the divine power. Their faith is not unreasonable and their resurrection to new life must be just as secure and certain. The words ἐκ νεκρῶν form a figure of metonymy with the substitution of the inhabitants (the dead) for the realm of their habitation (death).

The refining of the idea of being complete in Christ is carried forward in 2:13-14, although midway through 2:13 there is a subtle shift in emphasis toward the divine power in Christ and this theme is built up further until it becomes the predominant topic of amplification in 2:15. The shift is made more evident by a change both in subject ("you" to "he") and in object ("you" to "us") towards the end of 2:13.

The topic of the audience's spiritual circumcision through death and resurrection is refined yet again in 2:13. Through *expositio* the same topic is repeated in different words with new elements introduced which thereby amplify the topic by dwelling on it. In 2:11 the Colossians were described as having received the circumcision of their hearts. In 2:12 this was shown to have been accomplished through their participation in Christ's death and to involve a resurrection to new life. Now in 2:13 the argument is extended to their pre-christian state.

A metamorphosis of the metaphors occurs at this point which establishes an *antithesis*. In 2:12 their death (burial) was understood to be a positive event. It was their means of participating in Christ; it was the circumcizing of their sin natures. Now in 2:13 the metaphor of death has been transformed into a negative way of describing their uncircumcized pre-christian state. They are described as having been dead to God (καὶ ὑμεῖς νεκροὺς ὄντας) with the causes given as transgressions and uncircumcision (ἐν τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν). The *iteratio* of νεκροὺς (νεκρῶν, 1:12) emphasizes the close connection between Christ's resurrection and their own, increasing the audience's

reassurance in their new life while vividly reminding them of the character of the old. As uncircumcised (whether physically or spiritually the general sense of the verse is not altered) gentile sinners they were spiritually dead and in need of the circumcision of Christ. The *antithesis* is created by the reversal in the metaphor of death/burial between 2:12 and 13. In 2:12 they are first assumed alive, then enter death with Christ in baptism. In 2:13 they are shown to be dead, then are brought to life by God through forgiveness.

With the movement of the argumentation to resurrection again the metamorphosis stops. Here the metaphor parallels that of 2:12, simply re-stating the idea. God has made them alive to himself, raising them with Christ: *συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ*. The theme is again extended (*incrementum*) by the phrase *χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν πάντα τὰ παραπτώματα*. The qualities which separated them from God (transgressions and uncircumcision) are fully removed. Uncircumcision had already been portrayed as removed in 1:11 before it was cited as an offence. Now with the mention of the forgiveness of transgressions (with the figure of *iteratio* in *παραπτώματα*) the work is to be seen as complete. The whole verse employs the argumentative device of comparison (*comparatio*, *σύγκρισις*) to contrast the old with the new and to emphasize the specialness and completeness of their new state.

As noted, we also find here at the end of the verse the changes of subject and object which introduce the shift away from concentration upon amplification of being complete in Christ toward amplification of the divine power at work in Christ.

In 2:12 "you were raised with him" (συνηγέρθητε), but here in 2:13 we find "he made you (some manuscripts read "us") alive with him" (συνεζωοποίησεν) and "having forgiven us" (χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν). The two themes which overlap one another in 2:13 and 14 become more fully separated at 2:15.

The fullness of the deity in Christ has worked the forgiveness of sins and through this brought new life to the audience. The thought is refined in 2:14 with the introduction of a new metaphor. This is the metaphor of the cancellation of a certificate of debt or obligation,¹⁷ apparently to the Mosaic law: ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν.¹⁸ Great emphasis is laid upon the negative effect of the document upon "us", first by the prominently placed prepositional phrase καθ' ἡμῶν and, second, by the repetition of the idea in the explanatory phrase ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν. In the second half of the verse this metaphor is combined with the vivid and brutal metaphor of crucifixion: καὶ αὐτὸ ἤρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ. The entire verse forms a figure of *hypotyposis*, the imaginative and vivid creation of a fictional scene, as God takes the certificate of debt and hammers it to the cross. It is possible that the phrase ἤρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου is a *latinismus* (= *de medio tollere*) meaning "abolish".¹⁹ The combination of metaphors here continues to illustrate the Christian's completeness

¹⁷See O'Brien, *Colossians*, 124.

¹⁸Yates, R. "Col. 2,14: Metaphor of Forgiveness," *Bib* 71 (1990), 248-259, after considering six different interpretations for χειρόγραφον (the law of Moses, a pact with Satan, an IOU from humanity to God, a heavenly book, penitential stelae, theophanic visions), proposes that it signifies a bond or certificate subscribed to by all people because of their sin.

¹⁹According to Blass, F. and Debrunner, A. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. R.W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), § 5(3b).

while portraying the mighty work of God through Christ. The verse is an expansion (*expolitio*) on the theme of forgiveness of sins introduced in 2:13.

The form and flavor of the argumentation continue as we reach the final verse of the first elaborated topic of the third proof in 2:15. The metaphors continue though they have moved into political and military themes. Like 2:14, the metaphorical language of this verse forms a figure of *hypotyposis* portraying God (or possibly Christ) as a king stripping his officials of their authority and publicly humiliating them, leading them in subjugation: ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ.²⁰ There is a figure of *hendiadys* in the words τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας²¹ while Aletti identifies θριαμβεύσας as a *latinismus* (*triumphare*).²² By destroying the obligation of the law through Christ, God stripped the authority from the principalities and powers which they held over mankind. This defines again an element of being complete in Christ while powerfully displaying the work of the deity in Christ.

²⁰Yates, R. "Col. 2.15: Christ Triumphant," *NTS* 37 (1991), 573-591, proposes unconvincingly that because the scene is one of triumph, the phrase ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ should not be interpreted as a shameful experience: the "principalities and powers" should be viewed not as demonic forces in subjugation, but as part of the celebrating hosts. The resulting translation reads: "Having stripped himself in death, he boldly made an open display of the angelic powers, leading them in triumphal (festal) procession on the cross."

²¹Although M.J. Harris believes that the repetition of the article indicates that two distinct entities are intended. *Colossians & Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 111; subsequently Harris, *Colossians*.

²²Aletti, *Colossians*, 185.

The main thesis of the *ratio cinatio* of this first elaborated topic is 1) that the audience has experienced spiritual generation (sufficiency) and 2) that God has worked through Christ to accomplish this spiritual regeneration by powerfully crushing the obstacles which blocked his way. This amplified evidence is presented to the audience to persuade them of the great treasure they have in Christ so that they will not be tempted away from him by empty human philosophy.

The second elaborated sub-topic of the *refutatio* (2:16-23), on maintaining Christian freedom, begins like the first with an admonition. It is introduced by the adverb *οὐν* which connects this topic to the first, subordinating it to the first, showing the progression of the argumentation. The second sub-topic builds upon the conclusions reached in the first, giving them practical application. Unlike the first elaborated topic, the second contains two admonitions, or rather an initial admonition which is reformulated following a brief enthymeme. The second *admonitio* is accompanied by a vituperative *ad hominem* attack on his opponents in accordance with classical rhetorical recommendation:

From the discussion of the person of our adversaries we shall secure goodwill by bringing them into hatred, unpopularity, or contempt. We shall force hatred upon them by adducing some base, high-handed, treacherous, cruel, impudent, malicious, or shameful act of theirs. We shall make our adversaries unpopular by setting forth their violent behavior, their dominance, factiousness, wealth, lack of self-restraint, high birth, clients, hospitality, club allegiance, or marriage alliances, and by making clear that they rely more upon these supports than upon the truth. We

shall bring our adversaries into contempt by presenting their idleness, cowardice, sloth, and luxurious habits.²³

The attack fortifies the *ethos* of the Apostle (and his gospel) and breaks down that of his adversaries by discrediting their actions and their ideas.²⁴

The first admonition, in 2:16, consists in a negative command: *μὴ οὖν τις ὑμῶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων.*²⁵

The Apostle employs several devices in 2:16 to belittle his opponents, their behavior, and their teachings. First he characterizes them as arrogant and judgemental by using the legal term *κρίνω*. They are portrayed as setting themselves up over the audience (who consequently are depicted as their victims) like courtroom judges with authority to pass sentence on transgressors. Next he employs for amplification *homoeoptoton* to create the pleasant taunting rhyme from same case endings (*ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει*). What he could have summarized in a simple clause (such as "in the practice of your religion") he has multiplied by using three objects, two of which are complimentary and practically conceptually

²³*AdHer* 1,5,8: *Ad adversariorum persona benivolentia captabitur si eos in odium, in invidiam, in contemptionem adducemus. In odium rapiemus si quid eorum spurce, superbe, perfidiose, crudeliter, confidenter, malitiose, flagitiose factum proferemus. In invidiam trahemus si vim, si potentiam, si factionem, divitias, incontinentiam, nobilitatem, clientelas, hospitium, sodalitatem, adfinitates adversariorum proferemus, et his adiumentis magis quam veritati eos confidere aperiemus. In contemptionem adducemus si inertiam, ignaviam, desidiam, luxuriam adversariorum proferemus.*

²⁴DuToit, A. "Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography," *Bib* 75 (1994), 403-412, argues that vilification of opponents was not primarily to characterize them but to dissociate the audience from them and reconfirm the audience's allegiance to the author and his party.

²⁵Martin, T. "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal. 4:10 and Col. 2:16," *NTS* 42 (1996), 105-119, proposes that the attack against keeping feasts and festivals was directed against the Colossian Christians, not their opponents. The list in Galatians refers, he suggests, to pagan festivities, while that in Colossians refers to Jewish ones.

synonymous (βρώσει/πόσει; each of which is a figure of metonymy²⁶) in that they concern consumption. Further amplification by accumulation results from the use of three nouns as modifiers of the noun μέρει: ἐορτῆς, νεομηνίας, σαββάτων. Finally the pace of the sentence is slowed and protracted by the addition of conjunctions (*polysyndeton*): καὶ...ἡ...ἡ...ἡ. All of these techniques serve to highlight the offensive nature of his opponents' actions by raising doubts about their attitudes and motives, multiplying the number of offenses, ridiculing the opponents (as petty and judgmental), and protracting the discussion of their offenses.

Immediately following this *admonitio* comes an enthymeme in 2:17 to justify it: ὅ ἐστιν σκιά τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The reason for the first injunction is here expressed by the *antithesis* of the intangible to the tangible. The regulations which the opponents are relying upon as their basis for judgement are portrayed by *synecdoche* as a mere shadow (σκιά) which precedes the appearance of the body (σῶμα) which casts it. This is a commonplace in the classical sense. The antithetical concept expressed makes its appeal to common sense and common observation. A shadow is of lesser importance than the body that casts the shadow. A shadow is a rough and inaccurate form, a poor two dimensional image of the body itself. Who would be so foolish as to honor a shadow when the body casting it has appeared? So this is simultaneously an attack upon the judgement, and thus the *ethos*, of the opponents. They are portrayed as foolish as well as arrogant and self-exulting (2:16). The *antithesis* is further enhanced by the

²⁶According to Harris, *Colossians*, 118.

simplistic beauty of its form. Its two brief balanced clauses (*isocolon*) mirror one another by placing the contrasted nouns first (σκιὰ...σῶμα) and following each by a genitive (σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων...σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ).

The second admonition, in 2:18, like the first consists in a negative command which parallels the first: μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβεύτω. In this metaphor ("disqualify", "condemn") the thought of the first injunction is continued and expanded upon (*incrementum*). The exact meaning of the entire verse is extremely difficult to ascertain and little or no elucidation is provided by its rhetoric. But at any rate it is reasonably clear that the descriptive phrase θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἐόρακεν ἐμβρατεύων, εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ continues the attack on the character and actions of the proponents of empty philosophy. The words θέλων ἐν are probably a *hebraism* meaning "delighting in". The combination ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων may represent a figure of *hendiadys* and so produce a meaning such as "religious humility", though this is in no way certain. The final phrase εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ maligns the opponents' motivation and *ethos*. They are arrogant, and that without cause. Furthermore, their arrogance derives from their sin nature. (Through the figure of *antimereia*, "mind of flesh" = fleshly/sinful mind.) What is propagated as high spirituality Paul shows to be in fact sinful and fleshly and those who propagate it hypocrites.

The polemical attack continues in 2:19 with the charge that these opponents

have severed themselves from Christ: *καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν*. The metonymy here certainly refers to Christ (cf. 1:18,24). This is a serious charge considering the evidence presented in the previous elaborated sub-argument (2:8-15) as to the person of Christ (fulness of deity) and the benefits to his followers (completeness). A further consequence is immediately threatened as the next phrase indicates: *ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβασζόμενον αὖξει τὴν αὖξιν τοῦ θεοῦ*. As with "head" above, "body" here represents the church via a figure of metonymy. The adjective *πᾶν* allows no exception to the rule presented. The entire phrase involves an expansion of the head/body metonymies into a full metaphor which vividly and clearly transports its message. The ornamental device of *derivatio/polyptoton* (*αὖξει τὴν αὖξιν*) adds flavor to the discourse and stresses what is lacking in the opponents. Their growth is not divinely inspired growth, nor can it be since they are cut off from the head. The commonplace of the superiority of the divine/creator over the human/created forms the basis. The added implication is that what does not grow from God must grow from some unwholesome source. It is also made clear that the impetus for growth lies with God, not human effort.

In 2:20 the author combines an enthymeme with the device of *erotema*: *εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, τί ὥς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε*; We have seen above that the author has already affirmed the Colossians' death with Christ (2:12-13). Now he uses this metaphor as evidence to allow his argument to progress one step forward. In the first instance he used it to

introduce the advantages and benefits obtained by being in Christ, now it serves to bolster the audience's resistance to the actions demanded by their opponents. The effect of the rhetorical question is to assert more firmly the audience's freedom from having to keep the regulations advocated by empty philosophy. A figure of *ellipsis* occurs with ἀπὸ introducing an abbreviated phrase which signifies more "from the power of the elements which they held over you". The figure keeps the verse short and powerful. There appears here also the common figure of metonymy in τοῦ κόσμου which signifies the realm of that which is yet outside the control of the kingdom of God.

In 2:21 Paul gives a vivid illustration of the demands of the opponents with a figure of *dialogismus* (*sermocinatio*), quoting his opponents speaking, as if they were present: μὴ ἄψη μὴδὲ γεύση μὴδὲ θίγης. The effect is amplified by *polysyndeton*. The presentation of their negative commands adds support to the Apostle's attempt to destroy their *ethos*. Although it is possible that these were actual prohibitions of the opponents, because no objects are expressed it is more likely that they represent more a caricaturing of typical regulations.

Reasons for not submitting to the prohibitions of the "philosophers" are given straightforwardly in 2:22-23. First, the commands concern the realm of the perishable, the finite, the earthly not the heavenly: ἃ ἐστὶν πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει. The negative coloring (*color*) throughout the refutation is seen here especially in the inclusion of the words εἰς φθορὰν. Second, the commands derive from the frail, corrupt source of human wisdom, not from divine revelation or

action: κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων. The weight of this argument is multiplied by the use of *hendiadys* (ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας). These first two arguments derive from the commonplace of the innately understood superiority of the infinite over the finite, the eternal over the mortal, the divine over the human. This is the same *locus communis* appealed to at the beginning of the *refutatio* in 2:8 and here helps round off this argumentative section and bring it to a close. Finally, in spite of their appearance, the commands are portrayed as ineffectual: ἄτινά ἐστιν λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος, οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι πρὸς πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός. A figure of *ellipsis* (or *anacoluthon*) occurs with the omission of δέ following μέν, while *polysyndeton* in the enumeration of the qualities of the opponents religious conduct adds emphasis by its elongated listing. "Flesh" again appears in its common role as a figure of metonymy and together with πλησμονὴν may form a figure of *anthimeria* producing the meaning "fleshly gratification" or "gratification of the sin nature". The persuasive impact of the entire verse is heightened by its ironic description.

The refutation attacks the opposing philosophy/ies first by showing the benefits of being in Christ accomplished by the working of God through Christ, and thus what would be lost by being tempted away from Christ. Then the attack is aimed directly at the dangers of the opposing "philosophy", exposing the loss their teaching would involve for Christians and its ineffectuality.

The refutation and confirmation are tied together by the theme of dying/rising with Christ first introduced at 2:12. The theme of dying with Christ has been elaborated upon beginning at 2:20; the theme of having been raised with Christ will be dealt with at 3:1 at the beginning of the confirmation.

IV.C.3.c. The *Confirmatio* (3:1-4:6)

The tone of the refutation was negative. It concentrated upon discrediting the opponents and their teachings. The confirmation now swings to the positive, instructing and encouraging the audience in the way of righteousness, the way of Christ, the way which is pleasing to God. The refutation elaborated the topic of dying with Christ, the confirmation now takes up the topic of being made alive in Christ. Each of the elaborated sub-arguments of the confirmation expands upon this theme.²⁷

The third elaborated topic of the third proof of the *argumentatio* which runs from 3:1-4, begins the confirmation and is introductory to it. Its theme is the seeking of heavenly things. Aletti has noticed the introductory function of this section. He has proposed that 3:1-4 acts as a *partitio* which clearly announces the

²⁷R. Yates, in his article "The Christian Way of Life: The Paraenetic Material in Colossians 3:1-4:6," *EvQ* 63 (1991), 241-251, confirms that the vice and virtue lists, the domestic codes, and the *topoi* (the proverbial ethical lists) are not to be seen as a mere appendix, but rather are tied intimately to the key themes of dying and rising with Christ and the meaning of atonement found in chapters 1 and 2.

themes of two following waves of exhortations in 3:5-9a and 3:12-17. The two parts together (3:1-4 and 3:5-17) form a concentric composition, outlined as follows:²⁸

- a. Christological motivation: raised with Christ (3:1a)
- b. exhortations: opposition between:
 - β. celestial, to desire and think (3:1b-2a)
 - α. terrestrial, not to think (3:2b)
- a. Christological motivation: dead and hidden with Christ (3:3-4)
- Bα. exhortations to put the earthly man to death (3:5-9a)
 - A. motivation:
 - α. you have taken off the old man (3:9b)
 - β. you have put on the new man (3:10-11)
- Bβ. exhortations to live the new life in Christ (3:12-17)
 - + exhortations for familial life (3:18-4:1)

This elaborated topic begins with what Melanchthon calls a *circumdictione rhetorica* (or *circumductio*),²⁹ or expansion of a thought, drawn from the resurrection. In this he finds Paul's argument based upon the categories of cause to effect (*a causa*) and obligation (*a debito*) with appeal made to the topics of the possible (*possibile*) and the easy (*facile*). Bauer identifies the rhetorical genre of 3:1-4 as deliberative.³⁰ The continuity of the argumentation from refutation to confirmation is seen in the words *εἰ...συνηγέρθητε*, paralleling the *εἰ ἀπεθάνετε* of 2:20. This initial phrase, *εἰ οὖν συνεγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ*, is an enthymeme in support of the primary command which follows it: *τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε*. "The things above" is a figure of metonymy based upon the substitution of the direction of the

²⁸Aletti, *Colossiens*, 215f.

²⁹"*Circumductio*...collects many sentences, in clauses that are syllogistic, causal, relative, comparative, adversative, or even copulative", Melanchthon, *ElRhet* 499, quoted by Parker, endnote 1, in Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 118. Cf. *InstOr* 9,4,118; 11,3,39.

³⁰Bauer, *Rhetoricae Paullinae*, vol.1, 183.

place of abode for the one who lives there (i.e. God). The metonymy is then more precisely defined by a figure of *epergesis* in the phrase which follows: οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος. The description is made more vivid by the use of a metaphor which incorporates a figure of *anthropopatheia* with the ascribing to God of a human attribute in the words ἐν δεξιᾷ. The metaphor stresses Christ's supreme position of authority and divine favor over all creation. It is heavenly things, the concerns of the kingdom of God, which the Colossians are to be seeking.

In 3:2 the command is restated and refined (*expolitio*). First comes the positive restatement, τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, which includes an expansion of thought.³¹ A means for seeking the things above is stated: the concentration of the mind, meditation, upon heavenly concerns. It is followed by the negative expression of the command: μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Another figure of metonymy occurs with the words τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς signifying those things which are perishable and human, outside the realm of the kingdom of God. The verse initiates an *antithesis* which is better effective in defining the objective of the command by showing not only how to achieve it, but also how not to. Beauty, balance, and brevity result from the figure of *isocolon*.

The third and fourth verses of the chapter introduce another supporting enthymeme the validity of which, like the first in 3:1, has earlier been established

³¹In his commentary, Melanchthon notes the presence of a figure of speech at 3:2 in the phrase "things above", although he does not specify which figure (apparently metonymy); *Colossians*, 89.

(2:12-13,20): ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ.³² The emphasis of this established proof has, however, changed. The stress is laid not upon their past spiritual circumcision or their past deadness in sin but upon their continued state of being dead. Concentration is shifted to the future when their death will end with the revelation of their new life of resurrection in the other realm, the imperishable realm, the kingdom of God, when the "things above" descend to transform all "earthly" things: καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ. This is not a contradiction of the Apostle's earlier death metaphors, rather it is yet another development in the theme. When the theme first appears in 2:12 it is used to communicate the Colossians' death (burial) to their pre-christian lives (dead to sin), when it occurs again in 2:13 it communicates their pre-christian state (dead to God), when it occurs at 2:20 it communicates their freedom from the powers (dead to debt), now in 3:3 it communicates their pre-resurrection, pre-eschaton separation from the kingdom of God (dead to the things above). In this the verse contains a *paradoxon*. The Colossians have been raised to new life, but they are not yet in possession of that new life. It is hidden with Christ in God. The force of the proof, then, lies in this, that although they remain trapped in the realm of the perishable they should not live in its ways since their true home and true life are in the coming imperishable kingdom. The ascendancy of the earthly realm is fading, its sun is setting, its ways are obsolete. The way of the future is the way of the kingdom of God which is now hidden but shall soon be revealed.

³²Melanchthon also noted the parallelism of this argument to that of 3:1, with the theme now drawn from mortification; *Colossians*, 90.

The great transformation will occur *ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ*. With Christ's overturning of this realm and establishing of the kingdom here, then the Colossians will truly adopt their new life and thrive in its accompanying glory: *ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ*. Thus 3:4 explains and lends support to the enthymeme of 3:3 and continues its reasoning. The new life is real life and glorious life, yet more reason to practice living it now. The metonymy, *ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν*, also serves as a figure of *epergesis*. Its brevity keeps the verse focused on its main points while providing a bridge between 3:3 and 4, and it further emphasizes the importance of Christ. The phrase also introduces a figure of *anacoluthon* where the sequence of thought is broken by the change from second to first person plural. This device of disharmony can serve to arouse audience attention.

Finally, before leaving this section, it should be noted that Aletti believes that the strange order of events found here and resonating through to 3:17 (first resurrection, then death) has stylistic and theological reasons. The chiasmic inversion of themes, noted above, with their declaration in 3:1-4 and their development in 3:5-17 has been constructed so that the author can finish with positive recommendations for his audience and so better encourage their "resurrected" life.³³

The fourth elaborated topic in 3:5-11 on the putting to death of vices grows

³³Aletti, *Colossiens*, 216.

directly from the third with its theme of seeking the things above. The fourth topic also shares a special relationship to the fifth (3:12-17), the two treating as they do the antithetical topics of vice and virtue.

The topic is expressed in a metaphor introduced by a command: *νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*. Once again it is the metaphor of death, though this time the death is something not yet fully accomplished but in need of carrying out. The object of the putting to death is *τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*. The term *τὰ μέλη* forms a figure of *catachresis* where "members" = "sins", the two concepts being only distantly connected. The description "on the earth" is a metonymy which connects the entire topic to the preceding one (cf. 3:2) and communicates the meaning of "perishable parts", "qualities of the old order". The whole phrase is a *periphrasis*, a device which adds depth and dignity to a subject by expressing it in more words than necessary. The "members" are set forth by a plain figure of *enumeratio* (*πορνείαν ἀκαθαρσίαν πάθος ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν*), a device of brevity which highlights the significance of each element, concentrating its force which otherwise would be dissipated. Melanchthon calls this Paul's beginning to give moral injunctions in outline (*in specie*).³⁴ The sexual sins listed are almost synonymous with one another so that the sense of the list is almost simply "sexual impurity and greed". *Asyndeton* strengthens the brevity and force of the enumeration, while the addition of *καὶ* at the end of 3:5 can be interpreted as

³⁴Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 92.

emphasizing *πλεονεξίαν*, as can the clause *ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία*,³⁵ which serves to define it.³⁶ A degree of assonance is added by *homoeoptoton*, the repetition of like sounding case endings.

This enumeration of vices is the first of three such lists, the others occurring at 3:8 and 12. The first two lists enumerate vices, that in 3:12 virtues. The lists share certain characteristics. Each names five vices or virtues, thus providing a total of ten vices and five virtues. Each list is introduced by an aorist imperative verb and each relies upon the figure of *asyndeton* for effect. Hatfield considers that these similarities constitute a figure of *parhomoiosis*, a device involving the repetition of sentences of similar length and structure in successive clauses but with different meanings.³⁷ An additional enumeration with differing characteristics appears in 3:11 and the entire sixth elaborated sub-argument (3:17-4:1) can also be classified as a type of *enumeratio*.

As the virtue and vice lists in 3:5,8, and 12 are the main focus of Hatfield's dissertation, it seems worthwhile to review some of his conclusions at this point in our analysis. According to Hatfield, Paul used virtue and vice lists in his letters to address both general and specific situations. They could provide a general warning against potential threats to a congregation or provide solutions for current problems

³⁵According to Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 210.

³⁶Hatfield identifies it as a figure of *epitrechon*, a device which involves a shift in expectation and denotes an addition by way of a statement thrown in, not complete in itself. The emphasis is upon *πλεονεξίαν* so that a connection is forged to the first commandment (Ex. 20:3); "Rhetorical Function", 218-219.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 216-217.

in the churches in general. Or they could be used to attack actual specific situations in a congregation or provide specific guidelines for the entire community of faith. Considering the great disagreement among scholars as to the origins of virtue and vice lists (Stoic, Hellenistic-Jewish, Iranian dualism, etc.), Hatfield believes that they are simply the result of fortuity and their explanation lies within their immediate contexts.³⁸

According to Hatfield, the virtue and vice lists fulfill a number of functions both in their relationship as oratorical parts of the text to other parts and in their relationship as a text to the audience. They inform, move, command, and accomplish effect. He finds the lists precise and balanced and the parts of the text complementary to one another providing continuity in the argumentation of 3:1-17. The figure of *climax* is used in 3:14 to promote cohesion, the separation of love from the other virtues highlights it as the chief virtue. Parallelisms are created in the text by the use of figures of *parhomoiosis*, *antithesis*, and *chiasmus*, all working together to highlight elements of each list and increase their impact upon the audience. The compactness of the lists emphasizes the terms enumerated and demonstrates their connection to Paul's line of argumentation while the figurative use of introductory imperatives adds a sense of urgency. Hatfield also believes that the author has been careful in his arrangement of terms and the appearance of the lists in order to combat the Colossian heresy, though he does not support this claim with evidence. He feels that the tone of the aorist imperatives will create *pathos* in

³⁸Ibid., 38.

the readers since these are commands, not suggestions. The verses intervening between the first list and the second build upon the *pathos* produced by 3:5 and introduce the list of social sins in 3:8, while 3:9-11 provides not only an interlude between the lists of 3:8 and 3:12, but also reiterates (repetition) Paul's command to put away sin and put on righteousness. The final list (3:12,14) commands to "put on", the *antithesis* of the vice lists which command a "putting off". This shows the readers that their post-conversion conduct is to be radically different from that before.³⁹

As is the style throughout most of the third elaborated proof of the *argumentatio*, an enthymeme follows the command to support its acceptance: δι' ᾧ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας. Vivid ornamentation is gained by the addition of the *epithet* "the sons of disobedience".

3:7 forms an expansion of the enthymeme of 3:6 (which appeals to divine judgement) while essentially repeating the "death" argument seen above in 2:20 to establish a further proof. The verse actually doubles its argument through repetition of idea in a chiasmic structure. The initial statement runs A ἐν οἷς καὶ, B ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε. It is then followed by an inverse repetition of the idea in B' ὅτε ἐζήτε, A' ἐν τούτοις.

A larger figure of *antithesis* underlies 3:7 and 8. This *antithesis* of "then" and "now" helps join the two vice catalogs together. The metaphor which introduces the vice list here (νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα) will also lead to the

³⁹Ibid., 219-222.

antithesis to the virtue list in 3:12, and so helps maintain argumentative cohesion. As in 3:5 the vices are listed by *enumeratio* (ὀργήν, θυμόν, κακίαν, βλασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογία) which, with *asyndeton*, maintains brevity while focusing attention on the terms named, giving them an importance which would otherwise be absent, while assonance is provided by *homoeoptoton*. The verse's parallels to the other vice/virtue lists have already been noted. The last element is again modified by an added phrase: ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν.

A final vice to avoid is added at 3:9a and supported by enthymemes in 9b and 10-11. It is introduced by an imperative: μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους. Its separation from the other vices and individual elaboration would suggest it is being singled out for emphasis. The first enthymeme given as a proof echoes in its argumentation the theme of the command preceding the last vice catalog, "taking off": ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ. The thematic repetition is ornamental and ties together the flow of argumentation. The old man/new man *antithesis* is formed out of two figures of metonymy and acts as a refinement of the antithetical theme of death/life so much appealed to in the argumentation. The second enthymeme is a restatement of the first in the form of its *antithesis*, the other side of the coin, so to speak: καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον. Somewhat paradoxically this new man is in a state of continual renewal: τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν. This explanatory phrase also acts as an enthymeme in support of the command for "heavenly thinking" (3:2), again showing the cohesion of the argumentation. The

second enthymeme is next elaborated on in 3:11 by means of a figure of *enumeratio*: ὅπου οὐκ ἔστι Ἕλληνας καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δούλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός. This time the *enumeratio* does not hold to the patterns established in 3:5 and 8. One of its purposes is still to highlight the individual groups listed in a compact manner, but its main task is to display the universal equality of all believers. The figure of *asyndeton* is present but less pervasive. The first two pairs of groups listed form a chiasm of synonymous pairs: A Ἕλληνας, B Ἰουδαῖος, B' περιτομὴ, A' ἀκροβυστία. The following pair are synonyms, βάρβαρος = Σκύθης, (or generic and specific)⁴⁰ while the last pair are again opposites, δούλος/ἐλεύθερος. The argumentation does suggest the possibility of racial or social factions existing in the congregation at Colossae, though it may also be a preventative warning.

The fifth elaborated topic in 3:12-17 is the correlative of the fourth, treating the putting on of virtues in *antithesis* to the putting off of vices. The topic begins in 3:12 with the metaphorical aorist imperative ἐνδύσασθε οὖν, which corresponds antithetically to the command to "put off" in 3:8 and the statement about "taking off" in 3:9. The object of the putting on are the virtues σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ χρηστότητα ταπεινοφροσύνην πραΰτητα μακροθυμίαν. The enumeration is carried

⁴⁰Martin, T. "The Scythian Perspective in Col. 3:11," *NovT* 37 (1995), 249-261, claims that the pair "barbarian"/"Scythian" should be seen from a Scythian point of view and therefore be regarded as *antithesis*. Campbell, D.A. "Unravelling Col. 3:11b," *NTS* 42 (1996), 120-132, suggests that as an *antithesis* "barbarian"/"Scythian" is conceptually repeated in the succeeding antithetical pair of "slave"/"free", as seen from the point of view of social history and rhetoric.

on with elaboration into 3:13: ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς ἕαν τις πρὸς τινὰ ἔχῃ μομφήν. Most of the functions, figures, and correspondences of this *enumeratio* are the same as those of 3:5 and 8 and so will not be repeated here. The peculiar phrase σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ has been identified as a *hebraism* by Melanchthon,⁴¹ a figure of *catathresis* by Hatfield,⁴² and a figure of *hendiadys* by Harris,⁴³ although its meaning is rather clear as "mercy", "compassion".

To back up this command the author immediately provides his first enthymeme in the middle of the command: ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἡγαπημένοι. This is an argument based upon *proprietas*, it is the only suitable way for God's chosen. A second enthymeme is introduced in 3:13b: καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς. They are to forgive freely because they have been forgiven freely. The power of this argument derives from the heading, or deliberative aim, of the just.

Another element of the enumeration appears in 3:14: ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην. Hatfield believes that a figure of *climax* has occurred over the preceding verses leading up to and culminating in "love", the chief virtue.⁴⁴ The defining phrase ὃ ἐστὶν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος, which also acts as a

⁴¹Melanchthon, *Colossians*, 98.

⁴²Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 218-219.

⁴³Harris, *Colossians*, 161.

⁴⁴Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 216-217.

supporting proof, employs a figure of *antimereia* with "bond of perfection" signifying "perfect bond". The device places emphasis upon the adjectival quality.

By 3:15 the quality of the argumentation is beginning to slacken. The proof is clearly starting to dissolve into a collection of commands held together by their general nature under the topic of virtues to put on. The trend continues for the rest of this topic, subsides somewhat in the next (domestic codes) because of the close association of its components, and quickens pace in the final elaborated topic in 4:2-6 so that a common theme is barely distinguishable. The topics are becoming more and more characterized by their lack of development. Most of the sub-points in the topics by this point consist only of an imperative followed by a brief enthymeme. There is little of the amplification so clearly evident in the first half of the epistle. The author seems impatient to reach the end or is running out of points to discuss.

3:15 consists of two commands, one with a supporting enthymeme. The first command *καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβεύετω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν* is embellished by the metaphor expressed in *βραβεύετω*. Its following enthymeme *εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι* is embellished by a figure of metonymy in "body" and bases its appeal upon duty. The second command is brief and completely unamplified: *καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε*.

The command of 3:16 is elaborated upon, but is not supported by an enthymeme. The metaphorical command, *ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως* is amplified by three dependent participials, the first two forming their own amplified unity: *ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς*. The

final participial phrase is amplified by a figure of *hendiatriis*: ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν τῇ χάριτι ᾗ δυνάμεθα ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ

The final verse concludes this elaborated topic with the most general, all-encompassing command possible for a discussion of christian virtues: "whatever you do, do it for Christ" (καὶ πᾶν ὃ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ). And tacked on is the brief expansion εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ).

The sixth elaborated sub-argument covers the topic of domestic order and harmony in 3:18-4:1. Unlike the other topics so far of the refutation and confirmation this one does not possess an introductory command which covers the content of the entire topic. Instead the form is of an enumeration of individual commands, each with its own accompanying enthymeme. The unit coheres because each element is clearly of the same species.

The unit is divided into instruction for six groups of individuals. The six groups form into three pairs of counterparts. Each group is first addressed by title, then presented with a command. Often an enthymeme is attached in support of a command. There is much appeal to *proprietas* and *honor*. For the most part the commands are straightforward with little amplification. In spite of the balance and order of this unit lift the level of rhetoric a little after its weakening in the preceding elaborated sub-argument.

The list begins with an address to wives to obey their husbands (αἰ

γυναῖκες, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν). The justification is propriety: ὡς ἀνῆκεν ἐν κυρίῳ (there may also be some appeal to the honorable). This command is complemented by an address to husbands with a double command to love their wives and avoid bitterness (οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς). No amplification or enthymeme is offered.

The text now shifts to children in 3:20 with the command of obedience to parents (τὰ τέκνα, ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν). Brief amplification (κατὰ πάντα) and an enthymeme are added (τοῦτο γὰρ εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν κυρίῳ). The appeal to the Lord's desire is not to the pleasant, but to the honorable. It may also appeal to obedience to the christian code of conduct and so be an appeal to what is just or right (*iustum*). The complementary address is to fathers. The command is given that they not provoke their children (οἱ πατέρες, μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν) with the supporting enthymeme ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμῶσιν. This is an appeal to the useful (*utile*).

Finally slaves and masters are addressed as the final complementary group. The slaves receive a disproportionately large share of text. They are given a double command, each of which is amplified and supported by an enthymeme. The first command is heavily amplified οἱ δοῦλοι, ὑπακούετε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις, μὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλίᾳ ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀπλότῃτι καρδίᾳ. The amplification consists in the description of the masters as κατὰ σάρκα to distinguish them from the heavenly lord in 4:1 and in the addition of the *antithesis* of descriptive qualifiers μὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλίᾳ ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀπλότῃτι καρδίᾳ which have the balance of *isocolon*. The amplification

appeals to the just. The enthymeme in support of the command is brief: φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον. Appeal is to the advantageous.

The second command mirrors the general command of 3:17, "do all that you do to the lord" (ὁ ἐὰν ποιῇτε, ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ). The final *antithesis* reinforces the meaning (καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις). The command is first supported by a positive enthymeme (εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου ἀπολήμψεσθε τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας) which is clarified by an explanation: τῷ κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε. The enthymeme again appeals to the advantageous. Then in *antithesis* a negative enthymeme is added, ὁ γὰρ ἀδικῶν κομίσεται ὃ ἠδίκησεν, and reinforced with a statement of God's justice: καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν προσωποληψία.

In comparison the masters receive only one command which is then supported by a brief enthymeme in the form of an *admonitio*. In the command the actual topics of appeal are mentioned: οἱ κύριοι, τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα τοῖς δούλοις παρέχεσθε. The enthymeme, εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔχετε κύριον ἐν οὐρανῷ, is based on an appeal to the advantageous (to avoid punishment and instead receive reward).

The seventh and final elaborated topic of the third proof of the argumentation in 4:2-6 treats the theme of christian vigilance. Aletti sees in these verses the qualities of an epilogue:

Les vv.2-6 sont vraiment des exhortations conclusives, car elles reprennent les grands thèmes de la lettre en même temps qu'elles ouvrent les baptisés au monde, à ceux qui n'appartiennent pas au corps ecclésial et que l'Auteur appelle «ceux du dehors». Fermeture (vv.2-

4) et ouverture (vv.5-6) font que ce passage conclut à la fois la section exhortative et les différents thèmes développés au cours de l'argumentation.

La reprise est assez aisée à repérer, (a) grâce à l'appel à la prière continue et à l'AG, qui renvoie à la section exhortative de Col 3, (b) grâce à la mention des chaînes et de l'annonce du «mystère», laquelle fait écho à Col 1,24-2,5; (c) enfin, le «comme il me faut le dire», pourrait faire allusion à cette nécessité qu'a l'Apôtre d'annoncer Christ sans compromis avec l'erreur (allusion à Col 2,6-23?). Quant à l'ouverture, elle s'impose, puisque l'Apôtre invite ses destinataires à être-dans-le-monde: rien ne les pousse à avoir peur ou à fuir «ceux du dehors», ils doivent au contraire pratiquer l'amabilité et le discernement. Bref, en ces versets, les sections argumentatives de la lettre trouvent un épilogue court et positif.⁴⁵

Although in this regard Aletti makes some interesting points, he seems too optimistic in thinking that this section repeats much of the main themes of the epistle or in suggesting that its brief statements with reference to those outside are a good sign of a conclusion, especially since such an idea appears not to fit into classical theory about perorations. The brief hints at former topics should not be considered a *recapitulatio* since the general themes of argumentation in this section are different from those of the epistle as a whole, different from those of the *propositio*. There is clearly no *indignatio* against the opponents or their teachings, and no *conquestio* to stir up the audience's emotions in support of the epistle's deliberative cause. This section does have one characteristic of a conclusion, and that is the sense that the commands offered here are the final commands of the body of the oration (Paul's request for prayer, for example). But these commands still belong to the argumentation, not to a peroration.

⁴⁵Aletti, *Colossiens*, 257f.

This elaborated topic divides into two themes, prayer and conduct towards those outside the church, in both of which vigilance is needed. There are few figures of speech in these verses but they are not without rhetorical art. After many verses of enumeration the author once again concentrates on amplification through refinement (*expolitio*), though still rather briefly in comparison to the refinement in the first half of the epistle. He begins with a command for prayer in 4:2 (τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε). Then the rest of 4:2-4 is taken up solely with the refinement of this small phrase. The desire for dedication to prayer is expressed again in the phrase γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ, and a new element is added with ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ. The theme is then developed through Paul's request for prayer (προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν) and its double objective. The first objective is expressed in a metaphor ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου. This is itself refined through an explanatory restatement (λαλῆσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) and a comment for arousing *pathos* expressed as a figure of metonymy (δι' ὃ καὶ δέδεμαι). The second objective in 4:4 (ἵνα φανερώσω αὐτὸ) is so much a repetition of thoughts already discussed that it barely moves the discourse forward. Finally the theme is closed by a statement which justifies the command and its objectives: ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι. This is an appeal to duty.

The final two verses of the *argumentatio* offer a briefer amplification of the theme of vigilance in conduct towards outsiders. Like the theme on prayer, this one begins with a command which is then amplified by refinement. The unembellished command in 4:5 is ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω. An enthymeme in the

form of a metaphor is then introduced as a supporting proof: τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι. This is followed by a subsidiary command in 4:6 which makes reference to one aspect of vigilance towards outsiders: ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι. The desired characteristic of their speech is then restated in a new, metaphorical sense (ἄλατι ἡρτυμένος) and the purpose of this command established: εἰδέναι πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἀποκρίνεσθαι.

IV.D. THE 'ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ (4:7-18)

This final part of Colossians serves as an epistolary postscript and conclusion to the letter. And although some of its features parallel those of a *peroratio*, it lacks the clear structures and guidelines set out in the ancient manuals of rhetoric.

In general, according to the theorists of ancient rhetoric,¹ a *peroratio*² has two main objectives: to refresh the memory of the audience with regard to the central theme of the oration and to influence the audience's emotions so that they will be encouraged to do the orator's bidding. To accomplish these two objectives a *peroratio* possesses three parts.³ Refreshing the audience's memory is accomplished by means of recapitulation (*recapitulatio*),⁴ a brief reiteration of the oration's main points. Enumeration should be brief, but ornamentation is also of importance. Recapitulation is especially useful for complex subjects, or as a closing which parallels a *partitio*. It can have an impact on the audience's emotions due to the concentrated accumulation which results from its brief listing of evidence and from any ornamentation. Influencing the audiences emotions can be achieved through *indignatio*⁵ and *conquestio*.⁶ *Indignatio* and *conquestio* depend upon the use

¹See *InstOr* 4,3,11f; 6,1,1ff; *DeInv* 1,52,98ff; *AdHer* 2,30,47ff; *ArRhet* 3,19,1; Lausberg, *Handbuch*, §§431-442.

²Also known as a *conclusio* or *cumulum* or *epilogus*/ἐπίλογος.

³*ArRhet* 3,19,1 lists four parts, although these seem really to be aims: 1. to dispose the judge favorably to one's own party and against one's opponent, 2. to amplify and depreciate, 3. to excite the emotions of the audience, and 4. to recapitulate.

⁴Also known as the *enumeratio*/ἀνακεφαλαίωσις.

⁵Also known as *amplificatio* or *exaggeratio*/δείνωσις.

of commonplaces to produce indignation towards the opposing cause and sympathy for our own. Sympathy for our case can be gained by briefly reiterating the same *loci* as used in the *pistis*. Another general means for gaining sympathy is the use of a *locus* on mankind's susceptibility to fortune.

The conclusion is important because it offers the last chance for the orator to influence his audience, which is why the attempt to move the audience's emotions is especially recommended here and usually reaches its peak here. Brevity is the chief virtue to be observed in the peroration, especially in the *conquestio* since the tears of pity dry quickly.

As for the opinions of the rhetorical commentators on this section of the epistle, Melancthon apparently did not feel there was much to gain from commenting on these verses and concluded his work at 4:6. Hatfield identifies 4:7-18 as a *conclusio* which consists of final greetings without much further comment.⁷ Aletti, having attributed a perorational function to 4:2-6, describes 4:7-18 as simply a return to the epistolary framework. This he divides into four distinct sections beginning with the mission of Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9), followed by salutations from Paul's collaborators (4:10-14) and Paul's salutations to the

⁶Also known as *commiseratio* or *miseratio*/ἔλεος.

⁷Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 182.

Laodiceans (4:15-17),⁸ and concluding with a final salutation to the Colossians (4:18).⁹

The transition into the peroration is the roughest and most obvious of the epistle, except perhaps the transition from prescript to *principium*. Although this concluding section is fairly long considering the total length of the letter, it comes abruptly, without warning, though a degeneration in style is apparent in the immediately preceding verses almost as if the author were running out of things to say.

4:7-18 is not a peroration in the purest sense. Its chief role is, as Aletti concludes, as an epistolary postscript, but it does possess certain characteristics of a peroration. The greetings bring an emotional element through their personal expression of friendship and solidarity. The topics discussed display the concern of the author and his companions, increasing further the power of their *ethos*. One of Tychicus's duties is to comfort the Colossians' hearts (4:8, παρακαλέσῃ τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν), Epaphras is laboring fervently for them (4:12, πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν) and is zealous and energetic for them (4:13, ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν). The closing verse of the letter carries a high pathetic charge, first with Paul's indication of his personal signature (ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ

⁸These verses would probably be better described by the phrase "final commands" since there is no certainty that Nympha or Archippus were Laodiceans, but each of the three verses contains an imperative.

⁹Aletti, *Colossiens*, 264.

χειρὶ Παύλου),¹⁰ more powerfully with his request that the audience remember his state of imprisonment (μνημονεύετε μου τῶν δεσμῶν), and finally with his personal blessing (ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν). The emotional flavor of 4:18 is increased by the use of rhetorical figures: "hand" is substituted for "signature" or "handwriting" in a figure of metonymy of subject (the exchange of one noun for another related noun), and via *synecdoche* "chains" represent "imprisonment".

There are also in these verses a couple of reminders of some of the epistle's main themes, though hardly a real recapitulation. Tychicus and Onesimus are described as faithful (4:7,9, πιστός) while Epaphras is laboring in prayer (4:12, ἀγωνιζόμενος...ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς), virtues the Apostle has recommended throughout. But the closest we come to a recapitulation is in 4:12b and 17. In 4:12b we are told the goal of Epaphras's prayers: ἵνα σταθῇτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ. And in 4:17 Archippus is admonished to carry out the ministry given him by God: βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς. This last verse is given power by the

¹⁰In 4:18 Paul claims to write the concluding postscript in his own hand (ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου). This seems to have been his normal practice as evidenced by three similar statements in other of his letters. 1 Cor 16:21 employs the exact phrase (ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου) as Col 4:18, and in Gal 6:11 Paul begins his postscript by pointing out a characteristic of his own handwriting, large letters ('Ἰδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ). But perhaps of greatest interest is the parallel postscript of 2 Thes 3:17 where we find a statement identical to that of both Col 4:18 and 1 Cor 16:21 (ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου) followed by a statement (ὁ ἐστὶν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ οὕτως γράφω) which would seem to suggest the possibility that Paul commonly employed an amanuensis in the writing of the body of his letters but later added the postscript himself in his distinctive handwriting. This is supported by Betz, "Literary Composition", 356:

This conforms to the epistolary convention of the time. An autobiographic postscript serves to authenticate the letter, to sum up its main points, or to add concerns which have come to the mind of the sender after the completion of the letter.

imperative βλέπε, a figure of *idiom* by which the literal meaning of "look" commonly signifies "take heed".

Beyond this, the conclusion tells us something of the rhetorical situation behind the letter. Tychicus, along with Onesimus, is being sent on a mission to the Colossians. The two men's mission is threefold: 1. to inform the Colossians about Paul's circumstances (4:7,9), 2. to find out about the Colossians' circumstances (4:8), and 3. to comfort the Colossians (4:8). Unfortunately, these statements are so brief that they offer little ground upon which to construct defensible speculations about the rhetorical situation. It might be suggested, however, that the first mentioned element of the mission is of special concern since it begins the conclusion at 4:7 and is repeated as the last point with regard to Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7 τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν; 4:9 πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσουσιν τὰ ὧδε)

The conclusion also contains several closing commands, most having to do with their neighboring church at Laodicea. These indicate an immediate and specific deliberative purpose in contrast to the general applicability of the deliberative commands in the rest of the letter. The Colossians are to give greetings to the brothers in Laodicea as well as to Nymphas and the church in her/his house. They are to have this epistle read to the church of Laodicea and themselves read the epistle from Laodicea. They are instructed to remind Archippus to fulfill the ministry God has given him, and finally they are asked to "remember" Paul's imprisonment, apparently a request for prayer on his behalf. Again, the situational elements mentioned are so brief that they are open to a vast range of interpretations.

Another interesting rhetorical feature of the conclusion is its use of what could be called the rhetoric of recommendation, epideictic which praises or promotes individuals. The style here is very similar to the encomiastic found in the *principium* in praise of Epaphras (1:7-8). The real "rhetoric of recommendation" is reserved for the bearers of the letter, Tychicus and Onesimus (and perhaps Mark since he is a potential visitor to Colossae). That is not to say that there is a qualifiable difference in the praise for these individuals, it is rather that only they are in a position which would need any statement of recommendation (or so the letter suggests). Tychicus is the first to be praised (4:7-8). He is introduced by the task which he is to carry out (τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τύχικος). He is then described and lauded by a series of three *epithets* connected by conjunctions to form a figure of *polysyndeton* which slows and concentrates the discourse (ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν κυρίῳ). Tychicus's authority is then established through being derived from the Apostle himself (ὃν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς). Tychicus's co-worker, Onesimus is praised employing similar means (4:9). First come two defining *epithets* (τῷ πιστῷ καὶ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ), then a relative phrase identifying him with the audience (ὃς ἐστὶν ἐξ ὑμῶν).

In similar fashion those remaining with Paul are praised, though more briefly. His Jewish co-workers, Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus, are each first defined by a single characteristic before a joint eulogy. Aristarchus (4:10) is described as his fellow prisoner (ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου, a vivid military *metaphor*), Mark (4:10) as the cousin of Barnabas (ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ), and Jesus (4:11) as

the one who is called Justus (ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰούστος). Each of these descriptions could be perceived as eulogistic, certainly Aristarchus's is. All three are then called co-workers for the Kingdom of God (συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ), Paul's fellow Jews (ἐκ περιτομῆς, a figure of *metonymy* common in Paul) who have brought him comfort (ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία). Of the three, Mark is singled out as a potential visitor and so a logical choice for praise and recommendation, though the eulogistic words for Aristarchus, Justus, and Luke (4:14; ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς) would suggest that the chief concern of this epideictic is not recommendation but simply the overflowing of Paul's love and goodwill towards his close friends, co-workers, and co-sufferers. A close equivalent is Romans 16.

The last to receive praise in the *conclusio* and the last besides Paul to send his greetings is the evangelist to the Colossians, Epaphras (4:12-13), who was also eulogized in 1:7f. Surprisingly no greetings are listed from Timothy, the co-author of 1:1. The pattern of brief, positive statements and *epithets* continues here. Epaphras is described as "one of you" (ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν), a servant of Christ (δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ), who is always laboring for the Colossians in prayer (πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς). Moreover, Paul testifies to his good character and hard work (μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν...).

Perhaps the element of greatest interest here, however, is how Paul identifies Epaphras with his very own aims expressed in the epistle. As noted, Epaphras is

praying ἵνα σταθῇτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ. This suggests that instead of the letter lending apostolic recommendation to Epaphras,¹¹ Paul may actually be gaining acceptability for the epistle by an appeal to the person of Epaphras, who possesses a strong and positive *ethos* in the eyes of the church at Colossae, a congregation he founded.

Finally, this orational part of Colossians contains little amplification or elaboration in comparison with all other parts of the epistle. There are a few figures and some elements of epideictic, but in general this section resembles the plain or Attic style more than any other part of Colossians. What material could actually be called a *peroratio* is very brief (since most of 4:7-18 is greetings and salutation) and "partial" (that is, much is left out, perhaps entrusted to Tychicus and Onesimus, while some matters are only hinted at and not otherwise mentioned in the epistle).

¹¹As suggested, for example, by Marxsen, *Introduction*, 177ff.

CHAPTER FIVE: RHETORICAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

V.A. RHETORICAL EVALUATION

The fifth and final task of a rhetorical analysis, according to Kennedy, is to evaluate the rhetorical effectiveness of the discourse under examination.¹ This involves determining the success of the argumentation in attaining its objectives in the audience and comparing the rhetoric of the discourse with the guidelines and recommendations of the manuals of rhetoric. In the case of Colossians the first evaluation, of the argumentation's success upon the audience, is impossible to make. There is no record, no tradition which tells us of the Colossians' response to the letter,² although its survival and incorporation into the New Testament canon speak for its perceived quality to the early church. For this reason our evaluation must concentrate upon the second point, comparing the rhetoric of Colossians with the recommendations of the rhetorical manuals.

Of the rhetorical critics, only Hatfield draws any conclusions about the rhetoric of the epistle. All of Hatfield's evaluation is positive and uncritical. He suggests that Paul's letters should not be judged stylistically according to classical

¹Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 38.

²The nearest hint we have comes from Revelation 3:14-22, the message to the church at Laodicea. By this later date the Laodicean church is apparently large and important enough to be designated as one of the "seven churches of Asia" (Rev 1:4,11). It is, however, upbraided for being lukewarm, half-hearted, and over-confident. This would suggest that in the long term Paul's letter failed to have the impact he desired.

standards, since Paul still retains Semitic patterns as models.³ Hatfield concludes that rhetorical criticism supports the case for the unity of the letter and that its rhetorical arrangement testifies to a carefully constructed argumentation with logical progression and thematic cohesion evident throughout, although he does believe there has been reliance on traditional materials at several points. He finds that in general Colossians does not fit any particular rhetorical genre. Instead rhetorical forms and sections appear in non-prescribed patterns within the epistolographical framework of the letter. In other words, Colossians is rhetorical, but breaks the rules of rhetoric set out by the rhetoricians.⁴

The paraenesis, and more specifically the lists of vices and virtues, he sees as being comprised of both specific and general teachings which are set together to meet the situation at hand and contain traditional material which has been molded to suit the immediate rhetorical needs rather than being static incorporations into the text.⁵ The vice and virtue lists (and presumably the entire "paraenesis") are informative, emotive, imperative, and performative. That is to say, their function

³But Hatfield does point out: "It is both probable and demonstrable that though Paul's style may have been unconventional by the standards of classical rhetoric, he knew and applied basic persuasive principles within his letters in order to elicit his readers to action" Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 110. Lund, *Chiasmus*, 142 suggests that Paul combines Greek and Hebraic patterns; see also Judge, "Paul's Boasting", 46; Rigaux, B. *The Letters of St. Paul*, trans. S. Yonick (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1962), 129.

⁴Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function", 224-225.

⁵Ibid., 222-224.

is to teach the audience (*docere*), to stir their emotions (*movere*), to move them to actively alter the *stasis* [i.e. exigence], and to raise their level of commitment.⁶

Hatfield feels that Paul has arranged the rhetorical parts of Colossians in order to strengthen his message and increase its power of persuasion. His arrangement of materials allows the establishment of important connections throughout, connections needed to develop the line of argumentation and move his audience to action. He concludes that the rhetorical parts by themselves, separated from their context, would appear only as examples of their respective genres, while viewed as integral parts of the argumentation their ability to increase the power and clarity of the message is clear.⁷ The arrangement, he declares, reflects the line of argumentation and its progression and cohesion.⁸ Paul progresses from theology to ethics yet his theme remains unified throughout. Surprisingly Hatfield can claim that "the structure of Colossians is characterized by clarity and simplicity".⁹

Finally, with regard to matters of style, Hatfield concludes that the rhetorical figures used in Colossians function on two levels: they help relate parts of the text

⁶Ibid., 225.

⁷Ibid., 186-187.

⁸Wendland, E.R. "Cohesion in Colossians: A Structural-Thematic Outline," *NotesTrans* 6 (1992), 28-62, also perceives cohesion in the letter's argumentation, a quality he believes Paul enhanced through his use of the technique of "lexical recursion" (i.e. *anaphora*).

⁹Hatfield, "Rhetorical Function," 183.

to one another and they help communicate the message of the text to the audience.¹⁰

The natural framework for an evaluation of a discourse's rhetoric is provided by the classical "duties of the orator", or *officia oratoris*. These consist of five elements: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery.¹¹ Delivery and memory have no application in the case of Colossians, and invention can only be interpreted through its residue which is the text itself. The three elements of invention, arrangement, and style blend into one another so that a precise circumscribing of each in either identification or evaluation is impossible. Thus the following evaluations of each are not meant to be completely exclusive of one another. As becomes quickly evident, Colossians by classical standards is a mixed bag of rhetorical successes and failures. Within the letter there are lurchings between artful mastery and artless meandering.

With regard to arrangement, the essential Aristotelian parts of proposition and proof are present. In addition a *principium* introduces the work and the propositional themes are set out in a *partitio*. As an epistle Colossians also possesses a prescript and a postscript. The only real fault here is the lack of a true *peroratio*. Although this is an optional *pars orationis* and although our text as a letter could be said to have sacrificed rhetorical concerns for epistolary, it seems that the epistle

¹⁰Ibid., 188-189. Cf. Nida, E.A. *Style and Discourse* (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1983), 45-55; Brandt, *Rhetoric of Argumentation*, 99-116.

¹¹E.g. *InstOr* 3,3,11: *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*.

could have only been strengthened by a recapitulation of the main points argued for and a final emotional appeal to harden the audience's resolve to carry out the author's wishes. The lack of these elements may be explained at least in part by the author's reliance on his emissaries Tychicus and Onesimus to follow up his work.

The transitions between parts are mostly very smooth and subtle, and often occur by means of a topical shift in mid-sentence. The roughest and most obvious is the shift to the conclusion, though this is hardly problematic. In fact most of the transitions could probably have been permitted to become harsher so as to make the structures more obvious and the line of argumentation easier to follow. The placement of the oration's parts is the *ordo naturalis* and the size of the various parts to one another is also natural for a *causa honesta*, with the *probatio* consuming the largest amount of space and a brief *principium* and *propositio*. The one part which seems "mis-sized" or out of proportion is the pseudo-peroration or concluding postscript which is perhaps larger than would be expected for the general brevity of the letter. This is probably attributable to its purpose as an epistolary postscript, the need to introduce the Apostle's emissaries, and the addition of a few essential final commands. Still it is longer as a proportion of the whole epistle than any of the other Paulines, including Romans. Another peculiarity of proportion regards the proofs of the *pistis*. The third and final "double" proof contains no fewer than seven elaborated sub-proofs formed into a *refutatio* and *confirmatio*. It dwarfs the other two proofs, especially the weakling second proof. This is not necessarily a problem. For the size of the third proof and its multiple elaborations shows how important it

was to the author. Its drawback is that potentially it unbalances the argumentation. The author would have done better to have reduced the size and perhaps even the number of sub-arguments in the third proof and at the same time increased their argumentative and ornamental quality, especially since there is a tendency towards degeneration in the course of the proof.

As for elements of invention, a similar scene emerges. The letter gives the feeling of being both prepared and unprepared; as if it were a constant movement between well thought out and well rehearsed parts and interludes of jumbled ramblings. Most of the epistle seems to be of the well prepared parts. The *principium* is clear, brief, and to the point, constructed as a chiastic *inclusio*. The serious but positive topics are presented in an attractive embellished middle style. The *propositio* follows this lead, briefly and clearly declaring the double *stasis* and plainly enumerating (i.e. listing, not numbering) the propositions of the argumentation in a *partitio*. The first elaborated argument also possesses a beautifully structured, highly embellished, densely argued proof. Through the first proof the letter maintains a high quality of organization, thought, and style. The second proof, however, disappoints. Although a chiastic substructure is distinguishable and a high level of embellishment continues, the course and substance of the argument is vague and meandering and thus gives rise to doubt as to what is the actual topic under discussion.

The third proof regains some of the honor lost in the second. The argumentation is certainly better organized being clearly distinguishable as refutation

preceding confirmation, both of these being supported by multiple elaborated sub-arguments. One problem arising in this section, for the modern reader at least, is that certain references in the *refutatio* are vague to the point of incomprehensibility (what is meant by "worship of angels", for example). It may be assumed that this was not the case for the original audience, but if it were, it would most likely constitute a vice of style. In general the third proof is well organized and structured with a full content, but perhaps because of the author's very desire to keep this proof from mushrooming too far out of proportion he falls victim to excessive condensation and enumeration. Although enumeration can be a device of powerful impact, when it is overused it can produce dryness of style. There is so little amplification in the *confirmatio* for so many commands that the style degenerates leaving the proof sounding more like a mere list than a sermon. Again, the lack of a true *peroratio* is noted (though further enumeration without amplification would only increase the stylistic malaise). The postscript, almost by definition, continues with lists but they are lightened by their personal touch and variety.

The style of Colossians is in general appropriate to its content. Its serious and lofty style suits the serious and dignified majestic sublimity of its holy topic. Its ornamentation helps evoke thankfulness and worship and works upon *pathos*. At times, however, it seems to stretch the boundaries of *proprietas* by preferring ornamentation and amplification to brevity and clarity (e.g. "being strengthened with all strength according to the power of his glory for all patience and endurance", "in the body of his flesh through death", etc.). At other times, however, the style is

tediously spartan, as for example in the list-like sections of the third proof (as noted above). It should probably be classified as belonging to the middle style since it is definitely ornamented (unlike the plain, Attic style) but is not so fully embellished and emotive as the grand (Asiatic) style.¹² Overall the style seems relatively well balanced, although modern sensitivities might find it at times too florid. As is to be expected, the epideictic portions of the epistle include a good measure of amplification and ornamentation. In epideictic

"the style is the most distinctive feature....A tendency to ornament of every kind is fostered....'A pomp and prodigality of words,' well-balanced periods, a style half poetic, half oratorical, are the qualities most desired."¹³

In epideictic, hymns and other forms of praise to gods are standard features.¹⁴ These are all features which we find in much of Colossians, especially in the *encomia* for the Father and Christ. Stylistic techniques include various types of repetition, synonyms, metaphors, chiasms, explicatory phrases, refining of themes (*expolitio*), etc.—all to heighten the emotive impact on the audience.

"Without doubt, to create presence it is useful to insist at length upon certain elements; in prolonging the attention given them, their presence in the consciousness of the audience is increased. Only by dwelling upon a subject does one create the desired emotions."¹⁵

In Colossians it is common for Paul to dwell on a topic by using explanatory

¹²See *AdHer* 4,8,11-4,10,14.

¹³Burgess, *Epideictic*, 94.

¹⁴See Burgess, *Epideictic*, 110-114, 130, 174-180, and 191-194.

¹⁵Perelman, *Realm of Rhetoric*, 37.

relative clauses, clauses introduced by *ὅτι*, *ὥνα*, or *γάρ*, and modifying participial constructions. Synonyms or synonymous ideas, often linked by genitive constructions (e.g. "the power of his might") allow refinement of a topic as do repetition of key words and cognates and amplification by accumulation (*congeries*).¹⁶ There is a tendency towards a repetitiveness of style through the repetition of certain rhetorical figures and grammatical structures and vocabulary. For example, metonymy, metaphor, *asyndeton*, *polysyndeton*, and *hendiadys* are prominent. Prepositional phrases are commonly strung together and there are numerous prepositional phrases incorporating *ἐν* to round off clauses. There is the constant recurrence of *πᾶς* and its cognates. There is a shift in the third proof towards less amplification. Arguments are more direct, sentences shorter, full of imperatives, imperatival participles, expressions of exhortation followed by infinitives (although epideictic is still present, as in the vituperative refutation).

Contrary to Hatfield, it would seem that to a large degree the epistle follows the general guidelines set out in the rhetorical manuals. But it also displays some technical weaknesses. However, it is impossible to determine whether these weaknesses had a detrimental effect on its impact upon the audience.

V.B. CONCLUSIONS

Now that our rhetorical analysis of Colossians is complete it remains to

¹⁶See Lausberg, *Handbuch*, 322-325.

summarize briefly the conclusions we have reached during the analysis and to see what implications our results have.

We noted in chapter one that certain scholars have questioned the unity and integrity of the text of Colossians. Some have proposed that the letter contains elements of an original Pauline letter, some believe this Pauline core can be reconstructed,¹⁷ others not.¹⁸ Numerous other scholars have suggested that the author has incorporated blocks of traditional material into the letter.¹⁹ Although with such questions there must always be an element of doubt, the results of our rhetorical analysis offer little support for such claims. The uniformity of theme and more or less logical progression of the argumentation, the "natural order" of the oratorical parts, the proportions of those parts, the visible relationship of all parts to the *stasis* and *propositio*, and most importantly the general conformity of characteristics of style throughout all support the integrity of the text. It is true that some sections (including the Christ hymn) are better worked than others, but these more beautifully fashioned sections are not limited to those normally identified as traditional or pre-existent (e.g. 1:1-12) and furthermore they fit with the flow and content of the entire document. It is also true that the second proof in particular is weakly argued, almost to the point of incoherence. But on the other hand, it is united to the rest of the document by its characteristic devices of grammar and

¹⁷E.g. Holtzmann, *Kritik*, 46-83, 303-314; von Soden, *Kolosser*, 320-368, 497-542, 672-702; Masson, *Colossiens*, 86, 159; and Harrison, "Onesimus", 271-274, 281f, 292f.

¹⁸E.g. Bowen, "Original Form", 200ff; Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, 269.

¹⁹E.g. Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 250-254; Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy", 149-168; Robinson, "Formal Analysis", 270-287; Cannon, *Traditional Materials*, 173.

rhetoric and so gives more the impression of a poorly argued argument than of foreign material. Removal of the "traditional materials" (1:12-23; 2:9-15; 3:5-4:6 as proposed by Cannon²⁰) would leave significant holes in the argumentation. This is true even, and especially, for that section which is most often cited as relying on a pre-existent source, the Christ hymn. There is no overwhelming rhetorical reason for holding that the Christ hymn existed prior to the writing of Colossians and, for example, that the author is relying on a traditional baptismal liturgy.²¹ Its characteristics of structure and style (with chiasms, antitheses, and other figures) are repeated throughout the epistle, suggesting that it is in fact a work of the same author. Although it has rather clear borders, which are a sign of a possible "intrusion", this is true of several other of the oratorical parts of the letter (the boundaries of the *refutatio* and *principium* are just as well defined). This does not rule out the possibility that the author was so skilled as to have been able to integrate traditional materials into the letter without leaving trace. But whether the Christ hymn was originally the work of the author of Colossians or not, he has certainly made it his own rhetorically. The rhetorical inconsistencies which do exist in the text, when considered in conjunction with its rhetorical congruencies, suggest rather an author who swings between moments of linguistic genius and mediocrity or between argumentational brilliance and unrefined thought than an editor seeking to hammer borrowed materials together with his own concepts and agenda. In any

²⁰Cannon, *Traditional Materials*, 173.

²¹Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy", 166f.

case the rhetorical analysis of the epistle raises fundamental questions regarding the viability of basic premises underlying much of the research into the letter carried out over several decades. If our conclusion is correct it would also have repercussions for the authorship question, namely for theories such as Cannon's which lay much stock in Paul's having incorporated pre-existent material to explain the letter's peculiarities in comparison with the undisputed Paulines.

We also in chapter one proposed a working outline of the epistle based upon Aristotle's theory of arrangement which has gained support from the majority of the analysis. This outline is not only more detailed than any epistolary outline but also more detailed than those of the other rhetorical commentators, while avoiding some of their weaknesses. We noted that Melancthon fails to identify any proof in the letter while Hatfield mentions no proposition, both of these being essential Aristotelian parts. Hatfield's division of the *probatio* into theological instruction and paraenesis also seems to derive more from the bulk of biblical commentaries than from rhetorical analysis. Likewise, Aletti seems too tied to Lamarche's generally fine structural outline to perceive the crystal clear expression of the proposition in 1:9-12. This leads him to formulate a bloated *exordium* well beyond the proportions necessary in a short letter with an honorable *causa*. He further fails to offer any explanation for the inflated *exordium* or justification for the inclusion of the Christ hymn within the introduction. Nor are Aletti's arguments for separating 4:2-6 off from the argumentation as perorational material convincing. They contain no more recapitulation or emotional appeal than several other portions of the *probatio* such

as 3:14-17 or 3:1-4. A skeptical conclusion would be that in searching for a peroration and not finding one he grabbed the material closest to the postscript and attributed perorational qualities to it.

In Chapter Two we proposed a rhetorical situation for the epistle. This included the presumption of Pauline authorship with the hope that the rhetorical analysis might offer further confirmations. The extensive length of the postscript does raise the question of why so long an epistolary closing would be added if the letter were not authentic. Additionally, the progressive shortening of the individual arguments and sentences seen in the third proof conforms with Barr's observations on scale in the Paulines.²² However, it is now clear that without a systematic comparison with the rhetoric of the undisputed Pauline epistles and extra-Pauline letters as a control (a comparison beyond the possible scope of this work), the rhetorical analysis of Colossians can shed little light on the question of authorship. Such a comparative analysis would, however, be a worthy subject of study. Nor can much be gleaned regarding the letter's relationship to the epistle to the Ephesians or its date or its place of composition apart from a comparative study which could hint at whether it should be considered later or early, Roman or Caesarean or Ephesian (assuming it is genuinely Pauline).

We can more confidently say, however, that theories which propose that the purpose of the epistle is to lend apostolic authority to Epaphras²³ or to the gospel

²²Barr, "Pauline Epistles," 22-41, and "Paul and Seneca," 16-25.

²³See, for example, Marxsen, *Introduction*, 180.

presented in the letter²⁴ do not find support from the rhetorical analysis. On the contrary, our rhetorical analysis suggests that the author attempts to *derive* ethical appeal *from* the person of Epaphras and *from* the gospel rather than to *give* ethical force *to* them.

In chapter two we also expressed doubts about the existence of an organized "heresy" at Colossae. Our rhetorical analysis seems to suggest (confirm would be too strong a term) that there were **no** proponents of heresy inside the churches of Colossae or Laodicea. The tone of the letter and approach to the audience is too positive throughout. There is no mention of factional groups or leaders within the congregation. Granted, this could itself be a device of insinuation, though such a theory is highly improbable since it requires rejecting the entire positive evidence of the epistle in favor of an authorial "hidden agenda". Neither is there much to suggest the existence of an *organized* heresy outside the church. Instead, the content and argumentation do indicate **a real external threat** from certain contemporaneous ideas or systems of ideas (philosophies) which are only briefly and indirectly indicated in the letter. Nor is there need to assume this to be a single, united philosophy (though it may well have been); the threat could have as easily come from elements of several co-existent "philosophies".

Our conclusions from Chapter Three about the letter's *stasis* and *genus* have not come into doubt during the analysis. The entire body of the epistle does seem aimed at fulfilling its *causa honesta*, answering the *quaestiones* of whether the

²⁴E.g. Käsemann, "Baptismal Liturgy", 166ff.

Colossians understand God's will fully and are living fully so as to please him. This in turn lends support to our designation of 1:9-12 as the *propositio*. The proposed deliberative intent of the epistle and its high percentage of epideictic are not brought into question in the analysis.

Our rhetorical analysis proper in Chapter Four has revealed how deeply and complexly structured the epistle to the Colossians is. Its detail and creativity are testimony to the author's artistic competence in spite of minor failings. Each oratorical part is in proper order, most are well proportioned (the second proof is perhaps too short, the third too long), and most are faithful in fulfilling their anticipated functions (again, the second proof seems weak here). The argumentation possesses a clear progression moving from introduction to expression of authorial desire (proposition), through theological reflection (*encomia*) to example (second proof) and imperatives (third proof). A peroration is lacking but the epistle is rounded off by an extended postscript. Moreover, the author's formation of extended arguments, his ubiquitous use of figures, and his high middle style are also worthy of respect. None of this should be taken to imply, however, that the author was consciously employing rhetoric. In fact, the weaknesses of the epistle from the viewpoint of the rhetorical manuals (indicated above in our evaluation) points to an unconscious, natural use of rhetoric or at least to an author incompletely trained or purposefully setting aside many precepts of "school" rhetoric.

Finally, a comment or two is called for on the method used itself. Although our analysis has met several of Kennedy's objectives (such as throwing light on to

questions of structure, redaction, the source of argumentative power, and authorial intent), it has not added much to the interpretation of the notoriously difficult passages of Chapter Two and it is uncertain that it has moved far in attaining his objective of reading the letter as it would have been read by the early Christians. Still on the whole the method does have its merits, while refinements in the methodologies of rhetorical analysis should bring greater clarity and ease to its practice and more interesting perspectives on the New Testament in the years ahead.

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